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MEMOIR  
OF  
DR. SAMPSON

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A memorial of the Christian  
life and character of

Mrs. Jas. W. Alexander.







A MEMORIAL

OF THE

CHRISTIAN LIFE AND CHARACTER

OF

FRANCIS S. SAMPSON, D. D.

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BY ROBERT L. DABNEY, D. D.

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Richmond, Va.

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1855.





## P R E F A C E .

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THE board of directors of Union Seminary, at their annual meeting after the death of Dr. SAMPSON, determined that it was proper to present to the churches, his brethren, and former pupils, some memorial of his christian and professional character. They requested me to prepare such a sketch ; and this little volume is the result. So far as a full and intimate acquaintance with his life, first as a pupil, and then as a colleague, can qualify one for such a task, that qualification I possess. And if an ardent personal attachment unfits one to draw the character of its object impartially, I must confess to this disqualification. It is for those who knew Dr. SAMPSON as well as I did, to judge whether the portraiture is accurate. I can express no better wish towards all his brethren and former pupils, than that the reading of this humble tribute to their lost friend, may give them the same mournful delight, and the same elevating and purifying lessons, which its preparation has given me. It is now affectionately dedicated to *the Alumni of Union Theological Seminary,*

*to the candidates for the ministry, and to the christian young men of the Synods of North Carolina and Virginia.*

A life, spent, like Dr. SAMPSON'S, far from the stormier scenes of the world, amidst scholastic shades, offers little material for narrative. I have, therefore, only attempted, after giving a brief outline of his uneventful life, to unfold the nature of his work and his character, and to indicate some of those lessons which they teach us. The community is so familiar with the best models of christian correspondence and diary, that it was thought best not to introduce such material into this sketch. But a few sermons have been selected, and appended to the narrative, because it was thought desirable that the reader should possess some more extended specimens of Dr. SAMPSON'S method, and because it was believed that many who once heard them from his glowing lips, will rejoice to revive, by their perusal, the recollections of those seasons.

ROBERT L. DABNEY.

*Union Theological Seminary, Va.*

*May 28th, 1855.*

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## INTRODUCTORY OUTLINE.

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DR. SAMPSON was the son of Mr. Richard Sampson, an eminent and respected agriculturist in the neighborhood of the Dover Mills, in the county of Goochland. He was born between the 1st and 5th of November A. D. 1814. In 1830, he was placed at the school, and in the family of that man of God, Rev. Thornton Rogers of Albemarle, who was his maternal uncle. Here he made a profession of religion, was baptized, and became a member of the Presbyterian church in Charlottesville, then in charge of Rev. Francis Bowman, on the 13th of August 1831. The 10th of September of the same year, he entered the University of Virginia, and continued his studies there till July 1836, taking a very extensive and thorough course of study, not only in the academic departments, but in the schools of junior law, anatomy and physiology, and securing the degree of M. A. which was then, as now, attained by very few. November 9th, 1836, he entered Union Theological Seminary, Va. On the resignation of Professor Balantine, in the spring of 1838, he was made teacher of Hebrew, and from that time continued to perform other duties of the oriental department. He was licensed by East Hanover Presbytery in October 1839, and ordained as an evangelist by the same Presbytery

in October 1841. In July 1848 he took a journey to Europe, for the prosecution of his oriental studies, and returned in August 1849, having spent the year chiefly at the Universities of Halle and Berlin. In October 1848, he was elected professor of oriental literature and languages in the Seminary; but he had for many years performed the work of a full professor, though with the title and compensation of an assistant, and had long been esteemed as second to none of his colleagues in the value of his labors. About the time of his return from Germany, he also received the honorary degree of D. D. from Hampden Sidney college. He fell asleep Sabbath, the 9th of April 1854, only thirty-nine years and five months old.

Thus brief and uneventful is the record of his life, which was passed almost wholly in the quiet shades of colleges. But the results of this life have not therefore been unimportant. The attempt will be made to draw the features of his character as a christian and christian minister, a scholar and an instructor, in order that we may praise God for his grace manifested in him, and may receive the advantages of an example most modest, and yet illustrious.

## CHAPTER I.

Person and Constitution. Dignity and Courtesy of Manner. Early Habits and Maxims. Influence of Example in a Different Sphere.

DR. SAMPSON was in person light and graceful, and of a florid complexion. Although his family has shown pulmonary tendencies in several of its members, and his own lungs were ultimately much impaired in their soundness, for the first thirty years of his life he enjoyed, by virtue of great temperance, most uniform health, and endured an immense amount of severe study. After he reached that age, he was gradually broken down by several attacks of acute disease, and though his health gave a delusive promise of restoration the last year of his life, he finally fell before a short and violent attack of pneumonia.

His personal habits, as to diet, sleep and recreation, were simple, methodical and temperate, without being ascetic. His dress was scrupulously neat and appropriate, without the faintest approach to display. In his approaches to his fellow men there was the happiest union of unaffected modesty and graceful quietude with christian dignity. Yet his was a dignity which repelled no advances of affection or confidence, nor anything but impertinence. His friends

who most desired to see him shine in society as his solid worth entitled him, sometimes accounted him too modest. Yet, with a modesty which almost amounted to diffidence, he was the farthest of all men from a timid or truckling expression of his opinions. When an erroneous sentiment which he conceived to be of any importance was thrust upon him in conversation, he most distinctly defended his own opinion, with a singular union of inflexible, even impracticable mental honesty and courteous deference. He was the last man in the world to be wheedled into the softening of a truth down, or the admission of a faint shade of the error he had been opposing, by any of the blandishments of politeness, or by the fear of seeming too pertinacious. Much of the singular amiability of his social character is no doubt to be attributed to the influence of grace. Had he grown up unconverted, he would have been known as a man of high and determined temper, of energetic will, and persevering activity. Divine grace softened what was violent, and refined what was valuable in this temperament, until the result was a rare and lovely union of the strong and the sweet.

One of Dr. Sampson's most striking and valuable natural traits was his methodical industry. To any one who knows his ancestry, it is very plain that this quality was received from them, both by inheritance and inculcation. That whatever is worth doing, is worth doing well; that each task must be done with one's might, in just so much time as is needed to do it perfectly, and no more; that no task is to be left



till all is perfected which can be done to advantage; these were the rules of working which he carried with him from the home of his boyhood to the school, the university, the study, the lecture room. The same thoroughness, the same deep ploughing, the same complete harrowing, the same utter extirpation of obstructions, the same perfect finish which characterized the farm of his father, prevailed in his scholarship and instructions. It would be hard to estimate how much of his usefulness and ability was due to the example and habits thus impressed on his youth. And we cannot but admire the wisdom of Providence in training, on such a field and by agencies so unconscious of the divine purposes, a quality which was afterwards to do so much good in a higher and nobler sphere of duty. Dr. Sampson, the eminent hebraist, the profound expositor, the masterly instructor, was but the far-seeing, energetic, able farmer reproduced on another field of action.

## CHAPTER II.

Enters Rev. Thornton Rogers' School. Religious Impressions. Decision. Personal Covenant. Diary. University of Virginia. Christian Activity there. Dr. White's Testimony. Goes to Union Theological Seminary. Zeal. Devotional Spirit. Humility. Liberality.

WE cannot proceed farther, without attempting to draw his christian character. This was in several respects singular: but in most, singularly excellent. The neighborhood in which he grew up, was very irregularly supplied with the preaching of the Gospel, and was wholly unblest with a sound pastoral influence. Consequently, domestic religion and pious training were nearly unknown. From a brief diary which Dr. Sampson kept during a part of the session of 1833-4, we learn that when he went to the Rev. Mr. Rogers' school, he did not possess a Bible of his own, and had never read more than very limited portions of it in his life. His character was wholly irreligious; and he was given to all the light and corrupting amusements of fashionable young persons. But he tells us, that the only outbreaking vice in which he indulged, was profane swearing; and this he contracted at the age of twelve, from vexation in a game of whist, in which he had an unusually bad hand.

With such a character, he found himself in a new world, in the well-ordered, christian family of his uncle. There the word of God was daily read, and his name reverently worshipped in the family. Although little personal exhortation was addressed to him concerning his sins and impenitence, he saw daily illustrations of the excellence and peace of christian principles, in the harmonious happiness of a pious house, where "brethren dwelt together in unity;" and above all, where the beauty of holiness shone from the example of the godly father, as he presided in the family and school room. In consequence chiefly of these silent teachings, he gradually fell into a state of profound religious concern, which continued about twelve months. His feelings were studiously concealed from all, through fear of ridicule; and the love of sin led him to put forth many and bitter struggles against the Spirit. But the God who loved him would not let him go; and his convictions were from time to time strengthened. In the spring of 1831, he chanced to hear a sermon from the Rev. Mr. Staunton, then of Prince Edward, from the text, "Secret things belong unto the Lord thy God," which was the means of sweeping away all his objections and excuses. His convictions now became so pungent that they compelled him to an outward reform of his life, and to set about seeking a present Saviour in earnest. But the fear of reproach and love of sin still made desperate struggles. On one occasion, while several of his school fellows were engaged with him in a game of marbles, one of them sneeringly observed, "Frank

must be getting pious. Do you notice, boys, that he has not been heard to swear for a fortnight?" This taunt stung him to the quick; and to show that he was not justly liable to their insinuation, he took the very first plausible occasion to throw out a most profane oath! But this heaven-daring act was made the crisis of his rebellion. For, his remorse, alarm of conscience, and fear of having grieved the Holy Spirit, together with his convictions of the corruption of his nature, and impotence of his own resolutions for piety became immediately so agonizing, that he was compelled to retire, and cast himself at once upon the Saviour's mercy. From this hour, his soul seems to have been built upon the rock Christ Jesus; and his face was turned decisively heavenward. He now first divulged his religious feelings to his uncle, in a letter which he handed him without seal or signature, and which detailed his struggles, his ignorance, his decision to be on the Lord's side, and his dawning peace.

Mr. Rogers had often made his salvation the subject of his secret wrestling with God. But so complete had been the concealment of Dr. Sampson's convictions, that his uncle was at this very time almost in despair of his conversion. And though Dr. Sampson had ever been docile and industrious in everything else, so impressed was his uncle with the evil influence which his profanity might exert in his family, that he had seriously considered the best means of removing him. As he was the son of a beloved sister, he had seriously thought of disbanding his school for a time, as the least painful mode of securing this end. In-

deed, he had only been deterred by intercessions of others, from carrying this purpose into effect. How delightful, then, must have been the surprise with which he received this letter, telling him that the great work had gone on so far under ground? This curious incident may carry home two truths to us, "That we should not be weary in well doing; for in due season we shall reap if we faint not;" and that much of the seed of truth which we sow is often lost, or smothered, for want of more constant and tender nursing.

But Dr. Sampson was more the spiritual child of the Rev. Thornton Rogers, than of any other person. He has often said that the means which efficaciously awakened him out of death in trespasses and sins, was not so much any particular sermon or warning, as the holy and consistent life of his uncle. This was to him the sermon, the rebuke, the "living epistle," which revealed to him his spiritual necessities.

No man since the Apostle Paul could use more truthfully his language, "When it pleased God who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me, immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood." Dr. Sampson was about to leave his uncle's roof, where alone he could expect to find any religious sympathy among his own friends, to return for a few weeks to his native neighborhood, in which every affectionate attention of his relatives would be a temptation, and where there were no sanctuary privileges nor christian communings

to help him on his way. Thence he was to go, in the early autumn, to the University of Virginia—an institution opened only six years before under infidel auspices, without prayers, chaplain, Bible class, Sabbath school—yea, we may say, without Sabbath; so that almost all godly parents kept their sons away from it with a pious dread; and vital religion was nearly unknown among its students.

We have seen the strong and almost fatal hold which the fear of ridicule had on his natural heart. Yet, from the moment his stand was taken, although but a youth of sixteen, fear was at an end. A courage more fixed than that of man, had taken possession of his breast. One of his first acts after confessing Christ, was to prepare a written address to his school mates, intended for the close of the session, in which he urges upon them the claims of christianity. These were the same school mates, whose ridicule had a little before almost driven him to reject the Holy Ghost! In this address, he discusses the following causes, which induce irreligious men to postpone attention to the Gospel: “An unwarranted dependence on the general mercy of God; objections to the incomprehensible mysteries contained in the Bible; and especially, the incomprehensibility of the doctrine of a Trinity; cavils against the number of sects into which christians are divided, and their bickerings; and skeptical doubts of the truth of the Scriptures.” These points are discussed, without striking originality indeed, but with a distinctness of thought, order and justice, most

remarkable in a school boy: and the temper of the address is marked by a happy union of christian boldness and affection.

The same decision of religious character marked all his christian course. His religion was now everything. His Bible was almost his only companion, among *books*. The fact that he learned so little of christianity through the colored and somewhat distorted medium, in which it is presented by the prescriptive religious habits and expressions of even good people, but drew his religious ideas direct from the Word of God, under the teachings of the Holy Spirit, may account for much of the excellence and symmetry of his religious character. In all his intercourse with relatives and associates, in his amusements and devotions, in everything, the desire to please God was uppermost.

There yet exists a correspondence of considerable bulk, extending through the five years of his University course, and later, with two favorite female cousins. In these letters, the desire to benefit their souls and his own, is ever the prominent, almost the sole concern. The great topic is approached at once, without squeamish circumlocutions, but with affectionate dignity and delicacy. His correspondents are continually reminded, that the chief aim and glory of a christian friendship should be, to give and receive edification, by the interchange of experiences and advice. He has no news or gossip to detail. Even from the first year of his christian life, these letters show a depth of experience and a range and fullness of chris-

tian knowledge, such as we would expect from a mature saint. From them and his brief diary, we learn with what punctuality and solemn diligence he engaged in the study of God's Word, searching his own heart, and secret prayer, as the first great business of each day.

We learn he declined living with a room mate during his second session, because his room mate the previous session, though amiable and moral, was unconverted; and his presence robbed him of his regular hours for secret devotion. In this exigency he was accustomed to resort to a wooded mountain hard by, for communion with God. And when, at the beginning of his third session, he received into his room a young gentleman like-minded to himself, who afterwards became a most intimate christian friend, an arrangement was made for retirement, as well as daily social prayer. From this friend we learn that when the hour of secret prayer found him languid and indisposed to devotion, instead of making such a state a pretext for the postponement of the duty, he found in it a powerful motive for its more diligent performance. However fatigued or overworked, he would take his Bible and read and meditate till he could bow his knees in the proper frame, saying that this languor and coldness were the very evidences that he needed fervent prayer at that special time.

The first of January 1834, he held a solemn review of the past year, and the state of his soul, and entered into a formal written covenant, to which his name is attached, engaging, with divine assistance, to live a life



of entire devotion. The form of covenant is marked as a quotation. Although conceived very much in the terms of the one given in Doddridge's *Rise and Progress*, for the young christian covenanting with God, it is not copied thence; and the source from which it was taken is not known. Perhaps it is enough to say that it is couched in terms of most devout and humble confession, ardent breathings after holiness, and adoring reverence of the divine perfections. Though the subsequent diary shows that those alternations of strength and weakness, joy and sorrow, were not wholly unknown to him, which are found in the experience of all eminent saints, yet this era was no doubt a new starting point to his soul in its religious race.

It is a characteristic fact that this diary, after having been punctually kept for several months, was discontinued. The ground assigned at its close was, that he began to suspect himself of coloring the statements of his feelings, from an involuntary reference to their being some day seen by others, and he feared that thus his christian sincerity might be corrupted!

Such holy diligence in prayer, such singleness of aim and such watchfulness, could not fail of their reward. He seems to have lived in the habitual exercise of religious joy; and often his soul mounted up with wings like eagles. It is believed that from his conversion to the day of his death, no serious cloud ever overshadowed his assurance. He lived continually under the peaceful light of a sure hope! How fully was the truth verified, in his christian courage, consis-

tency and intense activity for God, "The joy of the Lord is your strength?"

His position as a pious student among two hundred and fifty thoughtless young men, gave ample occasion to illustrate his christian decision. But yet, this quality was so admirably tempered with modesty and kindness, that it secured, instead of enmity, almost universal respect. His manner was quiet, simple, and unobtrusive. His religion was never thrust upon the notice of any one; but when any assault was made upon his principles, they were found immovable. He was obliging to all, even to the profane, wherever the sacrifice of conscience was not asked for. So kindly and unpharisaic was his demeanor, that many, then entirely irreligious, became warmly attached to him, and his usual college name was "Neighbor Sampson." Yet, so sincere was the respect for his principles, a thoughtless and profane student was heard once to remark, "I *can't* swear before Neighbor Sampson;" adding that there was no other christian student in the University to whom he would pay the tribute of such a self restraint. It is doubted whether a single taint, or one word disrespectful to his religion, was ever offered him with malicious intent among all the hundreds of ungodly young men by whom he was surrounded.

Let this be an effectual lesson to every young person, who shall read the character of this man of God, never more to be held in bondage by the fear of reproach or ridicule. An honest, christian courage com-

mands the involuntary homage of the worst. It is weakness and inconsistency which provoke the gibe and sneer. Dr. Sampson was not protected from them by any of those brilliant popular talents which dazzle the imagination of young men; for his abilities were not then appreciated. He was regarded as a plain and unpretending young man, whose conduct was spotlessly consistent, and whose christian courage was unshakable. It was this which covered him, amidst the most heaven-daring sinners, with a shield of affectionate respect.

The next trait of his christian character to be noted, was: His strict conscientiousness. Never have we known a christian who seemed more habitually to walk

“As ever in his great task-master’s eye.”

This conscientiousness was seen in the minutest pecuniary transactions, and in the scrupulous care with which he used the interests and property of the Seminary, and of those who entrusted their concerns to him. That word of our Lord was to him a living precept, “He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much.”

Instances of his scrupulousness might be mentioned, which some might almost regard as showing a “morbid conscience.” We can only say—Would to God that all his people were infected with the same disease. There was nothing morbid or exaggerated in his christian character. On the contrary, uniformity and good sense were its peculiar traits.

As instances of his conscientiousness, take the following:

We find him determining that he cannot lend his notes of the professors' lectures (for he was a famous note taker) to fellow students who studied them on the Sabbath. Although, in all other cases, unbounded in his kindness, where he had reason to believe that they would be so abused, he inflexibly exacted their return on Saturday. We find him, in every friendly letter, zealous to communicate some spiritual gift; and on his return from social visits, he frequently taxed himself with unfaithfulness, because he had been satisfied with the innocence of his social enjoyments, and had not enough watched for openings to speak for Christ.

On a visit to his beloved christian relatives in Albe-marle, he not only seeks to do good to his cousins, but seized an opportunity to "go into the kitchen at his grand father's and talk with old aunt Betty the cook, about Christ, his righteousness and atonement, our weakness and dependence on him, and the glorious prospects of the christian, and encourage her to constant prayer. She thanked me for my advice; and said she rejoiced in the Lord, and prayed that the Lord would make me happy and useful. She said she was so glad that I had come and talked with her about Christ. How happy is it, to be with a christian, whether white or black! How good is my God, who revealeth himself to the poor and the ignorant, that feel their need of him! While I talked with this kindred spirit, my own soul was quickened, and the tear of sympathy dropped down my cheek. The old woman

cannot read. Lord bless her soul, and give her grace, knowledge and true religion, with all its comforts? Let thy blessing rest on all with whom I conversed about Christ."

A few lines further we read this :

"Was detained by rain longer than I intended. Uncle Thornton lent me a horse to ride back. Conversed with the servant who came with me, about the danger of his immortal soul; endeavored to make plain to him the way of salvation, and showed him how reasonable it would be for God to cut him off in his sins, before he could repent. Lord bless him with salvation."

And this, reader, was not in the glow of a first love, nor in a season of religious excitement. He had been a professed christian nearly three years. How many ministers of the gospel may feel rebuke from these examples of evangelical zeal in a young college student!

In a like diligent spirit we find him performing each daily task, "as unto God and not man," regulating his diet with solemn christian self-denial, because he found himself sometimes indisposed, by partial excess, to prayer and meditation, and exerting his influence for good over his comrades by every means.

In his walks for recreation, he met with a plain but respectable countryman, seriously inclined, though not a believer; and this casual acquaintance was improved, to set on foot a Sabbath school in the mountains, and to seek the salvation of the farmer and his wife, by repeated visits, and careful instruction.

When he had fully dedicated himself to the ministry, and to the foreign missionary work, which, he then supposed, was to be his destination, he thrust aside obstacles to his great purpose, with a heroic self-denial, which can never be known, until the day which reveals the secrets of all hearts. In all the domestic relations of his subsequent life, in the duties of family devotions, in his functions as master and father, the inmate of his household could clearly perceive that God was continually before his eyes. As an officer of the Seminary he was ever at his post, with conscientious diligence. No sickness, which was not extreme, could detain him from his class room ; and the first day of his last, fatal illness, he attempted to rise and attend to his classes, and only desisted from his purpose when literally overpowered by weakness.

The christian reader will hardly need to be told, that such a believer as is above portrayed, abounded in active exertions, and the labors of love for Christ and perishing souls. To appreciate the strength of this active principle in him, we must remember the modesty, the almost shrinking diffidence of his christian character. A few instances of his zeal to do good have already been mentioned. When he went to the University of Virginia, there was no chaplain, nor religious observance of any kind. Occasional public worship had been held perhaps, by transient ministers of distinction ; and the sound religious sentiment which distinguishes the bulk of our people, was beginning to make itself felt among the governors of the institution ; so that they were not unwilling to pay the tri-

bute of some outward religious observance to this public opinion. Soon after Dr. Sampson went there, the Rev. Mr. Hamet, a Methodist minister of great fluency, and popular rhetorical powers, preached in Charlottesville; and the most thoughtless students were fascinated with his abilities. Advantage was taken of this, to introduce a permanent chaplain, and Mr. Hamet was the first who filled that office. The chaplain is usually selected by the faculty, with some conference with influential ministers of his own denomination, and is supported wholly by a voluntary subscription among the professors, students and other residents. He is chosen alternately from one of the four leading denominations, Methodist, Baptist, Episcopal and Presbyterian; and served at first one, but now two years. Dr. Sampson was very active in supporting this new enterprise, and gave valuable aid to Mr. Hamet, though his short stay in that office promised no very valuable religious results. He was succeeded by men of a more evangelical type; and to them all Dr. Sampson was a right hand, during his stay at the University, whatever their denomination. He was also the most active agent in originating the first Sabbath school in the University, and was its superintendent. We are assured by an eminent citizen, who was then a child in one of the families connected with the institution, that he was taught in this Sabbath school by Dr. Sampson, and there received his first saving impressions. The first private prayer meeting among the pious students of the University was equally indebted to his agency for its maintenance.

It met every Sabbath evening; and we find in his short diary frequent references to his enjoyment of its christian communion, and to his having addressed a word of exhortation to his brethren there.

The following sentences, communicated by the Rev. Dr. White, who was pastor of the Charlottesville church from the spring of 1836 to 1848, happily express the position which Dr. Sampson then held there:

“My acquaintance with Dr. Sampson commenced in the spring of 1836. He was then just closing his course at the University of Virginia; and on the 4th of July of that year, he took the degree of M. A. with great credit. The South Plains church then embraced the Presbyterians living in the University and Charlottesville. There were not more than sixteen members living at these places. On my arrival, he called on me, and although very modest, yet convinced me in one short interview, that he was a youth of no ordinary talents and piety. He was then, I should suppose, about twenty years of age—between twenty-one and twenty-two. He entered with great interest into conversation on the subject of religion; and had evidently thought and prayed much for the prosperity of Zion. He gave me more information respecting the condition of the church, and both said and did more to cheer me in the work I was about to undertake, than any one with whom I met. I well remember the first attempt I made to have evening service in the dirty and dilapidated church. When I reached the house, I found it was neither lighted nor unlocked. As I stood



in front of the building with half a dozen others, none of whom seemed to know what to do in this great emergency, Sampson came up, accompanied by several of his fellow students from the University. I was on the point of abandoning the undertaking in despair, when he, with his accustomed quickness and energy, said, 'Don't go yet—I'll see what can be done.' He hurried away, and very soon returned with candles in one hand, and the means of lighting them in the other—entered the house by raising one of the windows, and soon had the church opened, lighted, and ready for service. I preached to just one dozen hearers, and found no little help in doing so from the part he had acted.

“Through his whole course at the University, he was as much distinguished for his firmness as for his modesty, and as eminent for his piety as for his scholarship and talents. My impression is, that he established the first Sabbath school ever taught, and the first prayer meeting ever held in the University. I am sure he took a very active part in both these departments of benevolent and christian effort.

“A few weeks before he graduated, the lamented Professor Davis said to me, with a very sad expression of countenance, 'We are about to lose Sampson; and a sad loss it will be to the University. With a modesty and reserve seldom, if ever, equaled, he combines a firmness of purpose, and an openness and energy in seeking to check evil and do good, which have made him a great blessing to the whole institution. His influence over all classes of persons is astonishing. Has

your church no more such young men to send to us? The University might well afford to furnish any number of such with their board and tuition gratis.'

"I have always believed that the course he pursued and the influence he exerted contributed immensely to the great change which, from that time, began to take place in the religious character of that institution. My connection with him there ceased after some two or three months. In a pleasant interview with him just before he left, he said to me, 'I must preach the Gospel, or die in the attempt.' He left in the state of mind indicated by this remark; and you know the rest."

We cannot refrain from adding the closing paragraphs of Dr. White's remarks concerning him, though more confidential in their tone, and not relating to the subject immediately before us. His words give a touching and truthful picture of the impression made by the lovely christian simplicity and modesty of his demeanor.

"He spent two or three days with me, and preached twice for me during the summer preceding his death. The impression he made both upon my congregation and family, was of the most salutary and pleasing kind. His meekness and gentleness, his freedom from all ostentation and reserve, won the confidence of the youngest member of my household. So much so, that for weeks and months afterwards, his visit was frequently mentioned at my fireside, as an event to be remembered with mingled emotions of pleasure and pain. With pleasure, because we enjoyed the privi-

lege of entertaining him; and with pain, because we feared we should never enjoy this high privilege again. When this fear was realized by the announcement of his death, the deepest gloom passed over my family circle, and tears were shed that we should see his face no more."

If every pious student and other young christian were thus diligent in doing good, how different would be the aspect of our churches and colleges. What a new impression of the solemn reality and urgency of the work of redemption would replace in the minds of their thoughtless associates, that unreal and dreamy idea which they now entertain!

At the Union Seminary, which Dr. Sampson joined the fall after he left the University, his christian activity was similar. No man was farther than he from that misplaced zeal, which aspires to do the work of an evangelist, while still a student, at the expense of a student's proper duties. In preparation for the class room, in punctual attention to the routine of his duties, in accurate scholarship, he was among the foremost. But to do good was one of the recreations of his leisure hours. During a season of religious interest, which visited the College in the immediate neighborhood of the Seminary, he, with others, labored much in a modest way; and some of the subjects of that work, if ever they attain to that blessed world where we believe he now is, will have occasion to acknowledge their debt to his wisdom and love, to all eternity.

As soon as he was licensed to preach the Gospel, by the Presbytery of East Hanover, he began to abound

in evangelical labors, which, to his death, were increasingly acceptable to the churches. Besides the labors of his vacations, in his native county, and others at a distance from the Seminary, he preached steadily, at different times, in the College and Farmville churches, at Guinea in the county of Cumberland, Charlotte court-house, Walker's, Forest and Appomattox churches in the county of Prince Edward. Some of these labors were wholly gratuitous. For a considerable period, his stated labors not being more urgently needed in any of the churches of convenient access, he preached regularly to a congregation of colored people, for no other reward than the pleasure of doing good.

Another marked trait of his christian character was the uniformity and healthfulness of his devotional spirit. While his private habits in this matter were covered with a sacred veil, which none dared to attempt to lift—drawn alike by the reverence and the modesty of his spirit—his profiting was so outwardly evident to all, that no one could doubt his diligence in the closet. While his brief diary laments occasional spiritual declensions, there is reason to believe that he never knew what it was to lose the assurance of hope; and that the flame of devotion burned in him with a glow unusually steady. In public, his prayers were eminently edifying to believers, marked by scriptural tone, humble sincerity, appropriateness and comprehensiveness. But to know the sweetness of his spirit of prayer fully, one must have enjoyed the privilege of being an inmate of his house and fre-

quenting his domestic altar. Family prayers were, in his house, no hurried, unmeaning form. The whole air and tone of the exercise showed deep sincerity and earnestness. After a daily catechising of children and servants, the reading of the Word of God, and a hymn of praise, he bowed his knees with a composed awe and seriousness, which seemed to communicate itself to all the circle. What deep sincerity, what discrimination and justice, what point, what fullness, what grave tenderness characterized those prayers, as he brought before the throne of grace his household—his children, his servants, his relatives, his brethren in Christ, the Seminary, the church, and the whole interests of a perishing world! To those who were so happy as to be often present, it was not difficult to believe that these services would leave their calm and holy savor upon the spirit, throughout all the toils and cares of the day, like “the dew upon Hemon, and as the dews that descended upon the mountains of Zion.”

His religious principles were strikingly illustrated also, by the manner in which he felt the call to the ministry.

As has been already indicated, his definite purpose was fixed, in this matter, during his residence at the University. It was formed in the face of the strongest influences and the most brilliant allurements to more wordly and ambitious pursuits. He has left on record the great benefit which he received in this respect, as well as in others, from the Biography of James Brainerd Taylor, edited by Dr. John H. Rice. The prin-

principles illustrated in the life of that devoted young christian had a powerful influence in fixing his resolution to consecrate himself to the work of preaching the Gospel. But this purpose began to dawn in his soul from the very beginning of his christian life. On one occasion the writer asked him, what were the time and means for bringing the claims of the ministry home to his conscience. He answered, "There never was a time, in my christian life, when I did not feel the claims of the ministry." In reply to the question, how this was, he continued, "I simply reasoned thus: I had given myself wholly up to God, to be used for his highest glory, and if he needed me most in the work of the ministry, as seemed every way probable, as a thing of course I was bound to be a minister."

His settled purpose, during a large part of his University and Seminary course, was, to prepare himself thoroughly for the work of a translator in some important foreign mission. He was led to this purpose by his success and accuracy as a linguist, and his humble estimate of his own talents, and his capacities for public speaking. He seems to have thought that he was deficient in all those more brilliant gifts, which secure success in the pulpit; that his only talent was a patience, diligence and accuracy, which would make him a correct scholar, and that this humble talent he could best use for his master's glory, in the unobtrusive drudgery of rendering God's Word into the tongue of some Pagan people. With this object, he devoted himself most diligently to languages, drilled and cul-

tivated his mind as thoroughly as possible in his preparatory course, and, in the Seminary, mastered as thoroughly as possible the languages of the Scriptures. But his master thought not so. When his Seminary course was but two-thirds done, he called him, by his Providence and the voice of his church, to a responsible work at home; and speedily rewarded his humble fidelity, by giving him fame and influence in the pulpit, of which he had judged himself unworthy.

Now, here is a lesson for those young christians, who make a lack of special capacity for speaking or of similar qualifications, their pretext for declining the claims of the ministry. This servant of God had a *sincere* distrust of his own capacities; but with a heart consecrated with equal sincerity to his Saviour's service, he humbly offered himself to the work, to do what he could, believing that God would accept him according to that which he had, and not according to that which he had not. Yea, and he was accepted; and not only used his scholastic accuracy for the service of God in a high and honorable sphere, but became one of the most admired and impressive preachers of the land.

Young christian, if thy self-distrust is genuine, go thou and do likewise. But if it is feigned, remember that "all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do."

Our portraiture would be recognized by all the friends of Dr. Sampson as incomplete, if we omitted those which were, to all, his most obvious traits: mo-

desty and disinterestedness. One of his most faithful friends was accustomed to say of him, "If Brother Sampson has a fault, it is that he is too modest." This virtue was impressed upon his social demeanor, upon all his acts of conscientious decision, and upon his deportment in all the courts of the church. There, he was usually a respectful listener, and a rare and brief speaker. When his sense of the importance of a measure called him out, his remarks were direct, lucid and weighty, and offered with an air which showed that he shrunk from occupying the time and attention of the body longer than was unavoidable. Self-display and self-seeking were ideas which none that knew him associated with his name. Always estimating his own talents and knowledge below their real worth, he rather shrank from promotion than sought it. He waited for the call of his brethren and Providence; and it is believed that there never existed a case, in which he consented to lift a finger, directly or indirectly, to promote his own advancement, even by honorable means. Before he became a student of divinity, he refused very flattering offers of literary employment, not inconsistent with clerical duties. And after he engaged in the service of the Seminary, and received the assurances of his brethren that they judged his labors essential to the cause of God in that institution, no inconveniences in his post, and no advantages offered from without, weighed a feather towards leaving it. During this time, several offers of employment, such as professorships, more lucrative, and not unworthy of a christian minister, were made



to him. His answer always was, that God seemed to have work for him to do where he was; and as long as this was so, he had no right to leave it for any increase of his personal comforts or emoluments. Meantime, those emoluments were so stinted for many years, in consequence of the financial embarrassments of the Seminary, as scarcely to afford the means of comfortable subsistence. Up to his formal election to the professorship in which he died, while he performed the full duties of a professor in fact, and was acknowledged by all to be second to no one in the value of his labors, he received less than two-thirds of the emoluments belonging to the office of a professor in this institution. This continued for ten years—years of activity, and growing reputation and usefulness—second to none of the years of his life. When he left his post temporarily, to improve his knowledge and health in Europe, the directors of the Seminary continued to him this inadequate salary during his absence—feeling that his tour was, in fact, in the service of the Seminary, and that this was no more than a just reparation for the unavoidable scantiness of his previous compensation. But even this he declined to retain, and refunded it to the Seminary after his return, in annual installments. So that the last year of his life may be said to be the only one in which he received the full salary which he had all along deserved. Yet in refunding this sum, he considered himself as repaying a debt, and not conferring a gift.

A very few years before his death he came into possession of a part of his ample patrimony, and then his

benefactions increased with his ability. His donations to the Seminary and to other institutions of public interest, were bestowed with a generous hand.

His conscientiousness in the use of wealth, might well be imitated by many other christians. Whether his circumstances were scanty or affluent, he was simple in his tastes, unostentatious in his person, and economical from principle. In accordance with the general system of all his habits, he kept an exact account of all expenditures—a thing which is, indeed, a necessary foundation for the proper practice both of christian liberality and christian economy. He was economical only in order to have the means to be liberal. His christian hospitality was overflowing; and it was truly the hospitality of a christian minister, designed not for its own display, but for the bestowal of comfort on others. To every good cause he gave, always with the heart, and when his means became ample, with the hand of a prince. It was one of the secrets which his christian modesty never revealed, that he kept a strict account between himself and God, in which all sources of income were stated with scrupulous exactness, and a fixed and liberal portion of the sum was set apart to almsgiving; and this account was balanced with as much regularity as his bank book. Meantime, he was not without the pretext, which many professors of religion find for stinting their liberality, in the claims of a growing family.

## CHAPTER III.

Dr. Sampson as a Student. Wise and Resolute Plan. Thoroughness.  
Intense Application. His Scholarship—Its Range and Accuracy.

THE third general topic proposed to the reader, will be the habits of study and scholarship of Dr. Sampson. A brief statement of his methodical and thorough system of study has already been made. It may perhaps be said with truth, that the only peculiar indication of talent, which the beginning of his scholastic life gave, was the wise and resolute plan of study which he set before himself, and pursued from the first, with all the determination of his character. For surely, such wise determination is a *talent*—it is a trait of mental and moral greatness—and one rare and invaluable in a stripling of sixteen. He seems to have begun his collegiate course with a fixed reference to the greatest ultimate benefit. While he was a most punctual and laborious student, exact in all collegiate duties, allowing himself, for years, only six hours in bed, and but a scanty season for recreation, he did not fall into the temptation which overthrows so many at the University of Virginia. This is the ambition to run rapidly over the course, by an extraordinary and spasmodic exertion, and thereby to excite admiration,

and to pass speedily into the duties of active life. Dr. Sampson's course, on the contrary, was long and deliberate, covering five years. Many distinguished citizens, who were his fellow students, state that he was at first only known as "an excellent student," of good sense and accurate habits; but that with every session, the appreciation of his abilities and learning increased. He seems to have practiced, from the first, the wisdom so rare in youth, of leaving nothing behind unmastered, of never weakening the accuracy of his faculties and perceptions by half prepared tasks, and half understood views. His scholarship was matured and digested, as he progressed. And this character was found eminently in all his subsequent acquisitions. It has been said that, as a Seminary student, he showed equal diligence and method. As a professor, his diligence was great, and his toil in study excessive, until increasing infirmities compelled him to relax his labors. It is well remembered by some of his pupils, that once, when taking a class over the Epistle to the Hebrews, which he had gone over more than once before, he spent, on an average, thirty hours of active study on each lesson, in additional preparation. But alas! here the intensity of his zeal reached its crisis. This was the last year of his firm, unbroken health; and henceforth, "while the spirit was willing, the flesh was weak."

If all our young ministry was inspired with such zeal, how glorious would be the result? Perhaps the number might be increased of those who, like our lamented brother, would have to say of themselves,

“The zeal of thy house hath consumed me,” and whose premature loss the church would bemoan just as their harvest of usefulness was beginning. But would not this spirit endue the ministry of reconciliation with an influence, a weight, a might, a glory, which would be cheaply purchased, even at so precious a cost? A costly price hath our Zion paid for this example, which she now offers to her young ministers, to teach them what is the diligence they should exercise! May God forbid that it should be lost on them. Happy is that man who falls at the high noon of his career, and on the spring tide of his success, at his post of duty; but happier is he who can so temper a burning activity with a holy prudence, and so avoid both a corroding sluggishness and a rash over exertion, as to rise brightly to the meridian of his powers, and then decline gently towards their serene evening, and thus to bless the church both with his earlier strength and his riper experience.

By such system and diligence, Dr. Sampson became one of the best educated men of our country. In all the departments of letters he was able, above the average. His knowledge of systematic theology was profound and extensive. Of church history he retained a knowledge far superior to that which most young ministers bring to their ordination, although his department called him away from these studies; and he was accustomed to complain that his memory was treacherous with regard to those of its stores which he had no opportunity to review. His mastery of Latin and Greek, and of most of the polite languages

of modern Europe, would have abundantly qualified him for the highest posts of instruction in America. To say that it was such as becomes a well educated minister, would be utterly inadequate to the truth. But his ripest acquirements were in the Hebrew literature and the exposition of the Scripture. Here, as is well known, he was pre-eminent for thoroughness, accuracy and philosophical arrangement. While there may be many who possess an equal familiarity with these departments of learning, it may be safely asserted that, as a *teacher* of Hebrew, there was not his superior on our continent.

## CHAPTER IV.

Characteristics as a Teacher. Tact. Vivacity. Earnestness. Patience.  
Intercourse with Pupils. Hebrew Prelections.

THIS naturally suggests another subject of remark—his character as an instructor. In his practical skill as a teacher, was his peculiar value to the church of our day; for as a master of the art of communicating knowledge, he was, in our view, unrivaled. It was not that his lectures presented those grand sayings which electrify for the moment, nor that any one of his efforts produced on the pupil an impress of pre-eminent talent—but there was just the combination of that justness of mind, steady animation, thorough knowledge, patience and tact, which gave the highest skill in teaching, both as it is a trade and as it is a science. He was equal to its profoundest researches. He shunned none of its most irksome drudgeries. One of the foundation stones of his success was his own indisputable scholarship. No man ever passed through one of his classes without a profound and admiring conviction of this. Another was in his un-failing animation and vivacity of mind, which was so keen, even on subjects usually esteemed dry, as to

seem unaccountable to many. The exertion of voice and body which he unconsciously employed, when thoroughly warmed to his work, was often the subject of playful remark between him and his colleagues. This animation communicated itself to his pupils—so that usually their highest diligence was exerted in his department, though it was one not most attractive to all minds. But to this result another quality, which is invaluable to the teacher, also contributed. This was the energy of his own will, which pressed on towards the objects of his exertion with an impetus which swept all along with it, and communicated its own life to the most sluggish. In every act of his in the class room, there was expressed the idea of *work*; and all who frequented it soon felt instinctively that it was not the place for loitering. It might be said that his watchword was *thoroughness*. With an admirable patience, he expounded his subject so as to make it luminous to the weakest eye; and if his questions revealed the fact that there was still some one who did not fully comprehend, he would resume his explanation, and repeat in varied forms, till his ideas were thoroughly mastered. Out of this habit, and the propensity of his mind to thorough work, probably grew that which might have been considered his prominent fault as an instructor. His explanations sometimes degenerated into excessive amplification, which became wearisome to those who had given him a moderate degree of attention from the beginning; and he thus unduly protracted his prelections.

His intercourse with his pupils was marked by a



happy union of modest dignity, which repelled improper encroachments, and cordial, ingenuous kindness, which conciliated confidence. In his presence, each one felt that there was a simplicity and candor which set the stamp of reality on every kind attention. It is believed that there is not one of his pupils who did not feel for him not only respect, but warm affection; and many can join in the sad words of one who remarked, when speaking of his death, "Well, I never expect to meet with another Minister of the Gospel, whom I shall love and revere as I did that man." Often it was a subject of wonder to his colleagues, how so much affection could be retained from those towards whom he exercised so much fidelity in admonishing.

The distinctive traits of his expository instructions may perhaps be described as justice of thought, neatness, and impartiality of mind. He believed the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures. His soul loved their spiritual truths; and often in the lecture room he soared away from the dry dissection of words and propositions, into regions of devout meditation, and made his class forget for the time the exercises of the head, in the nobler exercises of the heart.

It was in his Hebrew prelections that his mental excellence shone most distinctly. He had applied the broadest principles of etymology to the elements of this language, in a manner original and philosophical; and had thus reduced them to an order which, so far as we know, is not equaled by any published grammar. His lectures unfolded the Hebrew etymology

with a lucid order, beauty and simplicity, which could not fail to delight every intelligent learner. Indeed, if we may be permitted to introduce our own judgment, after frequenting the halls of three separate institutions of learning, and sitting under some of the most gifted and learned men who have appeared on this side of the Atlantic, Dr. Sampson's lectures on the Hebrew language, and some other departments, seem to us the most philosophical, the most complete, *the best teaching* to which we ever listened. None who attended his prelections on the canon of Scripture (of which there remains a brief specimen in his "University Lecture," will forget the masterly nature of the argument there constructed. It is one not servilely copied or compiled from previous writers, but constructed on his own plan. He has there built, upon a foundation of adamant, a structure whose ribs of steel are knit together with the strength of mathematical demonstration. No part is wanting, and every part is in its exact place. It stands *totus teres et rotundus*, impenetrable everywhere to refutation.

Alas! that there remain no permanent records of most of these invaluable instructions, except in the scanty and scattered notes of his pupils. In his later years, Dr. Sampson regretted often that he had not found time to fix upon paper more of his course of instruction. But such was his unambitious and self-sacrificing spirit, that he always yielded to the urgent demands of the present, and preferred the thorough performance of his duties to his classes, to the gathering of those fruits of his researches, which would have

promoted the fame of his authorship. He said, that if he became an author, he must be a less diligent teacher. There was not time to be, thoroughly, both at once. And he preferred rather to leave his record written on the minds and hearts of the rising ministry of our Synods, where it might be fruitful in the enlightening of souls, than in volumes which would hand down his name to future ages. But besides this, he was cut down just when the fruits of his arduous studies were coming to their rich maturity. Had he lived to old age, he might have gathered some of them into books, for the benefit of a wider and more remote circle.

## CHAPTER V.

Dr. Sampson as a Preacher. Simplicity of Style. Logical Arrangement. Elevation of Thought. Steadily advancing Reputation. Lesson of Encouragement to young Divines.

THE reader will almost be able to surmise, from what has now been said, the character of his preaching. It exhibited always the lucid order, and the animation of mind which marked everything which he produced. His best sermons rose to a grade of excellence which is seldom displayed in any part of the church. And it was an excellence which was most appreciated by the most cultivated and mature minds. Whilst there were other preachers, who would be more sought after by the masses, he was preferred by the men of thought and acquirement. His plans of discussion were marked by a just and comprehensive view, which showed both the profound theologian, and the ripe biblical scholar, who had drunk deep into the spirit of the Word of God. His propositions were usually stated with singular accuracy and beauty of language; but it was a beauty rather logical than theoretical, rather chaste than florid. Indeed, his whole method of discussion wore an appearance of directness, too severe to admit

of any license of ornament. Yet, in the judgment of all those who are capable of appreciating a felicitous purity and aptness of language, and thoughts of vigorous symmetry, many passages in his sermons rose to the highest grade of eloquence, coupled as they were with his genuine fervor and fire. His preaching was rich in matter, and eminently scriptural, such as is best fitted to feed the spiritual mind. It was always remarkable for its elegance and elevation, which were never tarnished by anything coarse in allusion, ludicrous in association, or bungling in structure. But it was, the least of all men's, a finical elegance. It was rather that of an energetic and lofty simplicity. That men of strictly scholastic training and pursuits should excel in the particular work of the pulpit, is rather the exception; but he was certainly one of the most brilliant of these exceptions. By the intelligent public his preaching was even as highly esteemed as his professional labors were by intelligent students.

This fact is dwelt on, because it contains most instructive encouragement to all beginners in the pulpit work. When Dr. Sampson first began to preach, he was far from being an easy or impressive speaker. His first attempts had little to commend them, except that excellence of composition which was the unavoidable result of his thorough training and good mind. He labored under a constraint and embarrassment, painful to himself and his hearers. His voice was not modulated, and his gesture was scant and unformed. But every effort showed improvement; and a few years of diligent exertion placed him in the front rank

of impressive, pungent and fervent pulpit orators. His voice became resonant and musical; his action dignified and energetic.

Such an example should effectually remove the discouragements of those who suppose they are deficient in pulpit gifts; and it should teach all to feel their responsibility to set up for themselves a high standard of excellence, and to be satisfied with no dull mediocrity in sacred oratory. Provided they have good sense and diligence, let them not persuade themselves that the road is closed up to them, which leads to the higher grades of excellence in this art. The things by which Dr. Sampson was enabled so thoroughly to overcome his original defects, were undoubtedly these: First, there was his superior scholarship, which gave him mental furniture, and supplied the best material upon which to build a style. Had he not been a superior scholar, had his mind not been thoroughly drilled and invigorated by its inner training, his early manner would never have been improved into one so eminently good. Next, should be mentioned the modesty, humility and ingenuousness of his christian character. He learned to preach well, because he aimed to preach not himself, but Jesus Christ. Those words of our Saviour proved strictly true, in their application to his understanding of the art of expressing religious truth: "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." His eye was single. His prevailing purpose was to show forth the way of life: and his taste was not perverted, nor his manner poisoned, by the itchings of conceit, or the ambition for display. And,

in the third place, he was diligent. Not only did he preach much, "in season and out of season," but he preached with careful and laborious preparation. And where there is a natural substratum of good sense, unfettered by any physical defect, these means will usually be sufficient to overcome any amount of incipient difficulties or failures, and to make any man, if not an orator of the first rank, an impressive and pleasing speaker.

## CHAPTER VI.

Intellectual Traits. Genius and Talent. Symmetry. Analytic Faculty.  
Imagination. Memory. Candid Estimate of his Powers.

It is in the life and acts of a man that the faculties and traits of his mind make themselves known to others. Consequently, the preceding exhibition of Dr. Sampson's character as a scholar, teacher and preacher, is also a portraiture, in some sense, of his intellect. No more is necessary, therefore, than to sum up the whole with a few general remarks. Dr. Sampson could not be called a genius. He was what is far better—a man of high talent. His mind presented nothing that was salient or astonishing. But this was not so much because there was not power, as because it was power symmetrically developed. His was just one of those excellent minds, which grow most, and longest, by good cultivation. In wide and adventurous range, his speculative powers were not equal to those of some other men; but in power of correct analysis, in soundness of judgment and logical perspicacity, he was superior to all we have ever known, except a very few. Indeed, when a speculative subject was fully spread out before his mind for



consideration, his conclusions seemed to be guided by a penetration and justness of thought almost infallible. This consideration was deliberate; and his decision was very rarely expressed with haste, or even with promptitude. Hence his writings and conversation never exhibited any of that paradox, or that bold novelty and dangerous originality, which are too often mistaken for greatness. His talents, if they had less to awaken an empty astonishment and admiration, were far safer, more reliable and more useful. It was hard for anything sophistical or unsatisfactory to escape detection under his steady gaze. He was particularly free from that common fault of many minds of large grasp: the adopting of *major* propositions so large that they will contain the conclusion which the reasoner desires to derive from them; but at the same time so shadowy, that they contain he knows not how much more.

In his powers of arrangement, he was undoubtedly superior to any man we have ever known. In his mind, the elements of thought seemed to group themselves always, and spontaneously, into the most philosophical order possible, with a regularity like that of the atoms of limpid water, when they crystallize into transparent ice.

The efforts of Dr. Sampson's imagination were rather of that kind which Mr. Macaulay describes in Sir James Macintosh. They consisted not so much in the original grouping of elements into new, but life-like forms, as in selecting appropriate forms already shaped out, from the stores of a well furnished me-

mory. In those severer exercises of the imagination, which are required in mathematical thought and in the bodying forth of scientific conceptions, this faculty was eminently distinct and vigorous. But in its more poetic exercises it was limited. His power of calling up that species of illustration which is flowing and graceful, was scanty; and while the operations of his faculties, especially in lecturing and preaching, were unusually fervent, it was rather, so far as it was not spiritual, the dry heat, if we may so term it, of intellectual animation, than the glow of genial fancies. And yet, there were a few occasions on which he showed a high measure of the graphic or pictorial power; which might indicate that this faculty was rather disused by him than lacking in him. Another of his mental peculiarities has been already hinted: his almost impracticable honesty. He could never be induced to accept a proposition unless it wholly commended itself to his mind as true. His memory was most retentive, for all things which were arranged in it by any logical association; but for things sole, or merely verbal, it was sometimes treacherous.

Upon the whole, considering the admirable justness and perspicacity of his mind, its vigor and accuracy in analysis, its wonderful capacity for philosophical arrangement, and the energy of its purposes, he might have been truthfully called a man of great powers. The symmetry of those powers, his modesty in their display, the very accuracy of thought which repressed all those paradoxical brilliancies that catch the admiration of the crowd, forbid that he should be promptly

appreciated. Hence his proper grade will probably only be assigned him by those who, like the writer, had opportunities to contemplate his mental powers deliberately. But it is his deliberate judgment—a judgment formed maturely, in advance of that warm personal attachment which he will ever esteem one of the chief blessings and honors of his life, that Dr. Sampson, for his particular work, possessed capacities unsurpassed by any man which our country has produced, and equaled by very few. Happy would it have been for our churches if they had fully known his worth.

## CHAPTER VII.

Failure of Health. Fluctuations of Disease. Flattering Hopes. Increased Diligence. Dr. Sampson's last Sermon. Final Attack. Concern of the whole Community. Prayer in Presbytery. Dying Exercises.

In the early spring of 1846, Dr. Sampson's ill health began with a terrible pleurisy; which was immediately provoked by fatigue and exposure in preaching the Gospel, but doubtless owed its more remote origin to the prostration of vital energy, produced by the intense application we have described above. After imminently threatening his life, this disease was subdued, but it did not leave him with a sound constitution. He seemed to be nearly re-established: and especially, on his return from Europe, his appearance of health and vivacity allayed all the fears of his friends. But not long after, he experienced another irreparable shock, in a severe nervous fever which overtook him on a journey. This left him with a nervous system and liver painfully deranged, and some threatening indications of pulmonary disease. From this time forth, he seldom knew what it was to enjoy comfortable strength. His most distressing symptoms were a feverish excitability of pulse, sleeplessness, and oc-

casional attacks of biliary derangement, which prostrated his muscular system for the time. But during his last session, his health, cheerfulness and hopefulness seemed to revive; and there was again a flattering promise of re-established strength and a long life. The returning prosperity of the beloved Seminary, the renewed and substantial assurances of interest and affection on the part of the churches and ministry, and the steps taken towards filling the vacancies in its faculty and dividing his responsibilities, seemed to be cordials to his mind and body. His enjoyment of the innocent blessings of life and its domestic affections, was intense, and his hold upon it was strong.

During this flattering season, he seemed to be conscientiously husbanding his strength, and employing all the means for preserving health. Once or twice he referred to the repeated and grievous blows, which a mysterious Providence had inflicted on the Seminary in the death of its most useful servants, and pleasantly said to his colleagues, "It is our duty to live just as long as we can, in order that the institution may have time to root itself." But alas! another blast was nearer than any of us feared, which shook its still unsettled strength, not less grievously than any which has burst upon it, since that which smote down its great founder in the flower of his strength and success. Nor did Dr. Sampson seem to be without anticipations of its approach. While he said nothing directly, and seemed rather to avoid any allusions to the previous symptoms, threatening his health, as a painful subject, yet the thought seemed to be ever treading close after

his eager footsteps, and spurring him to greater diligence, "The night cometh, when no man can work." More than once, when others expostulated with him for taxing himself beyond his strength, either by the fervency of his preaching, or the vigor with which he pushed through his Seminary duties, he answered, "Perhaps I have but a few days or weeks more in which to do my task. I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day."

And even so, the summons came, to him not unawares, but to us "like a thunderbolt from a cloudless sky." Sunday, the second of April, the venerable pastor being absent, he preached in the college church, from Prov. xi, 18. "The wicked worketh a deceitful work; but to him that soweth righteousness, shall be a sure reward." In this sermon he urged the contrast between the delusiveness of the objects pursued by the unbeliever, and the glorious sufficiency and certainty of the believer's reward, with a power of thought, an energy of manner, and a fervor of affection, which could not have been surpassed, if he had foreseen that this was his last message to his fellow men, and had poured the whole soul of a dying man into this final appeal. As we left the church that day, we felt that in this discourse his powers as a preacher of the gospel culminated. From that meridian height and splendor he fell—nay, rather, *he rose*; for the next Lord's day his soul (doubtless) ascended to those heavenly courts,

"Where congregations ne'er break up,  
And Sabbaths have no end."

After attending with zest upon all the religious services of the day, he retired to rest, apparently in his usual health—his last act having been to minister to the comfort of a sick servant. Before the next morning he was violently seized with what seemed at first to be one of the customary bilious attacks; but it proved a fatal and insidious pneumonia. Perhaps it was the more fatal, because he was providentially deprived of the assistance of his faithful family physician for nearly twenty-four hours after his first attack. When he first secured medical aid, his symptoms were most ominous; and after one or two delusive promises of relaxation, the disease finished its deadly work on Sabbath, April the 9th. His shattered frame had not the springs of an effectual resistance, and succumbed soon before a malady which is terrible even to the strongest.

The Wednesday after he was seized, West Hanover Presbytery convened at Brown's church, Cumberland, about fifteen miles from the Seminary. Perhaps the last business act which Dr. Sampson performed was one eminently characteristic of his punctuality. It was to send, by one of his colleagues, his excuse for absence from Presbytery, and a business paper of some importance to a third person, which he directed, with a special charge, to be placed without fail in the hands of the moderator. When the Presbytery learned his threatening condition, it proceeded at once to set apart a season of special intercession on his behalf. Highly as he had been appreciated by his brethren before, when they began to look in the face the consequences

of his loss, they seemed to awaken to a new sense of his value to the Seminary and the church. On Friday, and again on Saturday, when persons were recognized approaching the church, who were known to come direct from him, the house was almost deserted by the members, who came out, by an irrepressible impulse, to learn his state. Friday, when it was reported that there was a faint promise of amendment, it was agreed that the Presbytery should again unite in a season of intercession on his behalf; and prayer was offered, by the revered pastor of the College church, with a faith, tenderness, fervency and devout submission, which will never be forgotten to the dying day of those who heard it. Could such a prayer fail to enter into the ears of the *Lord of Sabaoth*? Doubtless it *was* heard and accepted; accepted even as that more bitter cry of our divine Exemplar was accepted: "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not my will, but thine, be done." "It is enough for the disciple to be as his Master." In all the congregations which received the news of our brother's danger, prayer was also made of the church unto God for him. The anxiety of the whole community concerning him revealed that he had a hold upon their respect and affections, which would not have been expected, if we remembered that his pursuits had been chiefly those of the study, and that he was rather among the people than of them. Persons going from the Seminary were everywhere stopped in the road by enquiries after his condition, in which there was a deep concern and tenderness, which came from the heart.



His religious exercises were just those of which his christian life gave promise—without fear, for he had long lived in the assurance of hope; and without transport, for a disease so violent and prostrating left no animal spirits for such feelings, foreign as they were at all times, to his religious habits. Early in his sickness, but after his disease had manifested itself as a dangerous one, he remarked to one of his nurses, “I find now, what I have always felt, that a sick bed is no place to prepare for eternity. But I have not *that* to do. I long ago made my peace with God. The God I have feebly preached to others is my support.”

His disease, attacking as it did the lungs, made talking both painful and injurious; and he and all about him were strongly inhibited by the physicians to converse much. He yielded an implicit obedience, remarking several times, “My life belongs not to myself, but to the church, the Seminary, my family, and to society; and it is my duty now not to consult my own inclinations, but conscientiously to observe the means of preserving life, as long as there is any hope.” Indeed, he seemed to study calmness of emotions, and even to avert his mind from those objects which would excite the more near domestic affections, which were, to one blessed as he was, so tender, and in the prospect of their interruption, so harrowing. Thus he observed the means of life with the same composed, conscientious principle with which he had usually addressed himself to any other duty.

During the later and more decisive assaults of his disease, reason at times wavered on her seat. In his

lucid moments he complained that his mind was filled with a teeming multitude of thoughts, new, varied, strange—some of them perplexed and troublous, some luminous and interesting. May it not be that this was the strife between the bedimming, enervating dominion of the flesh on the one hand, and the dawnings of that nobler life to which the spirit rises when it bursts from the mortal coil, on the other; and as the doubtful tide of combat rolled to and fro, the shadows of earth-born dinness and confusion were alternating with gleams of Heaven's own light over his soul?

In these seasons the influence of his predominant tastes and pursuits was strongly visible. His mind was busy with the Word of God, expounding, or investigating its treasures in the original tongues.

Three days before his death he said, "It seems to me that all the difficult passages of Scripture I have ever investigated are present to my eye now, in Greek, Hebrew, or Chaldee, and all clamoring for settlement. But I tell them all, Go away, I am sick, and cannot attend to you." The last of these seasons of wandering was the morning of the Lord's day on which he died. During this he said to one of his nurses, "See that wall—it is all written over with Scripture promises; and they are in letters so large that I can read them every one." It was answered, "Oh no, there is nothing there, except the plastering." But he persisted, "Yes—they are there—cannot I see them? Lay your head here, beside mine, and then you will see them plain." She wishing to beguile him into more composure said, "Oh, don't think of

these things—shut your eyes, and try to be quiet.” “Why,” replied he, “May I not read them? I know it is the Sabbath; but they are all Sunday reading—they are all from the Scripture.”

Now, whence were those characters, invisible to all others, but so distinct to his failing eye-sight? Doubtless, they were recalled from the stores of recollection, where they had lain hid, apparently lost to himself, by a memory stimulated into preternatural activity, either by the approach of the spirit's release from material bonds, or by the inexplicable influence of disease. And now the vivid conception was so bodied forth to the mind's eye, in the season of excitement, as to seem to him actually pictured on the diseased retina, where the real images of the external world were fading dimly into darkness. And thus the walls were covered, to his eye, with the ample scrolls of a memory enriched by years of study. How mercifully does God deal with his children? Here it was so ordered, that those hours, which, in our apprehensions, we only think of as filled with anguish and fear, were beguiled with the contemplation of those sacred truths which had been his delight in health. And is there not here another illustration of that theory which seems so like truth—that every impression ever made on the memory, though it may seem to us obliterated, is still there, and will some day be revived, that man's soul is but a fearful “*Palimpsest*,”\* where the earlier records are, only in seeming, removed to make way for the later, and all the labyrinthine history will stand out in let-

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\* De Quincey.

ters of light, genial or lurid, to be reread by the soul in eternity.

But after this, Dr. Sampson became more composed, and his self-possession returned completely; nor did it leave him again till the last moment. The strife between the powers of life and disease was decided; pain ceased, and he gently passed away. A few hours before the closing scene, his children were placed around his bed side, to receive his last words: but the effort to speak to them was so laborious, that at the suggestion of one of the physicians, he relinquished it. After they retired, he said with the most extreme difficulty, gasping a word at a time in whispers, between his labored respirations: "I had some things which I wished to say to them; but perhaps it is most wisely ordered that I should not say them. They know how I have lived. I have always taught them that God's Word is the only supreme rule of life. They have that—and it is enough. Perhaps they might have put my last words before God's Word." This was the last connected sentence he spoke.

How could he, whose business was to expound the Sacred Scriptures, have closed his life more appropriately, than with such an acquiescence in their complete sufficiency—coming as it did from the heart of a dying father?

Thus he quietly passed away, about 5 o'clock in the afternoon. The following Tuesday, he was borne to the grave, in the Seminary burying ground, by the hands of his pupils, and in the presence of a multitude, every one of whom seemed a sincere mourner.

## CHAPTER VIII.

Practical Teachings of such a Life. Reward of Patience and Faith.  
Humility crowned with Honor. The Price of great Usefulness.  
Home Institutions must be sustained. Men of deep toned Piety and  
profound Scholarship demanded.

AND here we should end our task, if we listened only to the promptings of our own feelings—leaving this life and this death to speak for themselves. But it is necessary that we should endeavor to enforce, more pointedly, a few of the impressive lessons which Providence has taught us in giving, and then taking, such a man. Of the appeal which his example speaks to the pious youth of our churches, to devote themselves wholly to God, of the loss which the Seminary and the Presbyterian church has sustained, of the darkness of this act of her head, and of the duty of implicit trust in the righteousness of his mysterious dealings, nothing will be said.

But looking back to the source of Dr. Sampson's christian life, in the holy example, prayers and instructions of the Rev. Thornton Rogers, we see a delightful illustration of the truth, that "he which converteth the sinner from the error of his ways," not only "saveth a soul from death, but hideth a multitude of

sins." When that good man labored in faith for the salvation of his irreligious pupil, he little knew what he was doing. His thought was to pluck him from perdition, and to make him a christian, possibly an humble minister. He did not know that he was instrumentally contributing the most essential part towards the raising up of a master in Israel, whose steady and benign light was to be a blessing to two great commonwealths, and whose christian virtues were to be reproduced in many scores of pastors, many of them, in their turn, pillars in the church, and fountains of an influence, national in its extent! Nor do we know, when we endeavor to do good, with how glorious a result our generous master may reward us. Let us, then, not be weary in well doing. Mr. Rogers died in the prime of his life, and his friends mourned over the mystery of such a stroke upon such a man, as we have lately over the loss of his more eminent pupil. But, if his ministerial life had resulted in nothing else but the gift of one such man to the church, would it not have been a sufficient result?

Again. The weakness of our faith often staggers at sacrifices of worldly good to be made, and difficulties to be encountered, in the path of duty. Let all to whom the voice of God comes, learn by the example of our brother, to dismiss these fears, and trust the united command and promise, "Trust in the LORD and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed." It was required of Dr. Sampson, in order to become a minister of the Gos-

pel, to relinquish, apparently, the direct road to wealth and distinction. In following the beck of his master, he was compelled to brave many obstacles, and face threatening privations. But they were, at last, little more than threats. By the divine blessing on his own economy and industry, he was able at all times to surround himself, and those dear to him, with the comforts and decencies of life; and these increased ultimately to an ample competency. His temporal life knew no real want; and there was no actual sacrifice of that external comfort with which unbelief would have seared him from his duty. And after all—in seeking the testimony of a good conscience towards God, he found that distinction which he had not sought; he gratified his friends by winning a far higher social position than that which he seemed to relinquish to serve God; and became the ornament and pride of his family. Let no man be afraid to trust God.

We find in the foregoing history also, a beautiful example of the honor which comes to true humility. If there was one moral trait pre-eminent in Dr. Sampson, it was modesty. The desire for self-display seemed to be foreign to his nature. He ever thought others better than himself. He never schemed or planned for promotion, but was guided by a magnanimous and elevated delicacy, which refused to lift a finger, even by any honorable competition, to secure distinction for himself. And in every public position, on the floor of every church court, his humility shrank from that prominence to which his wisdom entitled

him. But while, with a single eye, forgetful of self, he was taking care of his master's interests, that master took care of his reputation. Though his position was one of scholastic privacy, and his talents were rather solid than brilliant, he steadily grew upon the appreciation of his brethren, until his early death found him enjoying a confidence, love and admiration, solid and extensive enough to satisfy any ambition. Where is the man, of only thirty-nine years, within the limits of the whole Presbyterian church, whose death would now leave a gap harder to be filled, or excite a sorrow more general and sincere?

While our brother sought out the lowest seat, God said to him, and the church repeated, "Go up higher." Would that this example might seal upon the heart of every young minister in our church the lesson, "Every one that exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." Would that all the unworthy arts of an unsanctified ambition were as unknown in the church as they were in the conduct of this pure, christian gentleman. They are as foolish and suicidal as they are unworthy.

The results of Dr. Sampson's life and labors present a painful—yea, almost a cruel illustration of the evils which have more than once flowed from the tardy and partial co-operation, extended by our churches at the south, to their own public institutions. Here were industry, talents and acquirements that would have been sought after and valued by the largest theological schools in the land. Believing that God's providence pointed him to Union Seminary as his post, he



poured out the riches of his mental treasures in her service. And to purchase what? Was it a worthy result of such a life, or a sufficient recompense for such an expenditure, to train a body of pupils, ranging, during the sixteen years of his labors, from eleven to twenty? Let us not be misunderstood. We know that, intrinsically, the training of one true minister—yea, the salvation of one soul, is worth the whole labors of an army of the most learned divines during their whole life. And were there but the one soul in the world, liable to perdition, it would be the part of sober wisdom to expend all of this labor in its behalf alone. But while the field is so vast, and so white to the harvest, and opportunities for doing good open so immeasurably before the eye of christian enterprise, it is a waste to expend, for a very few, labors and talents which might elsewhere have blessed a multitude. We may securely ask this question, Suppose that the warmest friends of Union Seminary in 1838, being also the true friends of Dr. Sampson and of Christ's cause, could have foreseen that he had just sixteen precious years to labor; that he would soon attain such eminent capacities for his work; and that in spite of his acknowledged abilities, the lack of hearty co-operation and wise and seasonable effort on the part of others, would cabin and confine his field of usefulness to this narrow bound—would they themselves have been willing, would they have dared, to urge him to make the unequal sacrifice? A regard to the interests of Christ's kingdom would have forbidden it. They would have said, "We dare not sel-

fishly expend so much, for so small a result. The field is the world. Let him go where, being better sustained, he can effect something larger for his master." But they hoped better things for their own enterprise; and hoping, they honestly invited him to enlist in that important cause, in which they were sincerely struggling. He obeyed the call. He toiled on, hoping against hope, with magnanimous self-devotion; and most likely, sacrificed not only his labors, but his life, an expenditure partially useless, in endeavoring to bear his unequal burden. And now, after the catastrophe, as his friends stand over the grave of so much that was noble in morals, wise in understanding and vigorous in action, they feel a regret, cruel, yea, immedicable, except by the submissiveness of faith, that his precious life was, in part, spent in vain. Not in vain, thank God! as to *his* reward, nor useless as to those indirect results, which, we trust, the wisdom and grace of God will bring out of his labors and example. But he was permitted to reap but a part of those abundant fruits which such labors should have earned, in his own life time, in such a country and such an age as ours. And this regret is ever embittered by the symptoms of returning prosperity and extending usefulness, which now appear in his darling institution. How touching the fate, that after sixteen years of toil, and hopes deferred, he was snatched away just as the smiles of success began to gladden his heart! But here, our regret is softened by the thought, that he has entered upon a reward of his labors far sweeter than that of a visible success.

But this is not the first (would that it might be the last) instance, in which our people have been half aroused by a partial sense of our social necessities, so as to set on foot some weak and half endowed effort for their supply. And then they supinely relax, and even make the half starved weakness of those institutions which they call their own, and whose ill success is their own loss and shame, the pretext for bestowing their indolent and heedless favors on foreign institutions, which are flourishing and popular because their natural owners and supporters, with a wiser forecast and energy, stood by them in their weakness. Meantime, those nobler spirits, who have been thrust forward into the breach, and whose clearer vision sees the vital importance of home enterprises to all our vital interests, wear away the springs of life, in a generous but useless sacrifice. And meantime the commonwealth, for the lack of these home institutions, lags farther and farther in the rear, and sends forth her money, her sons, her energies, her life blood, to fecundate the soils and adorn the fame of rival states! Must a hecatomb of her noblest lives be immolated, before the slumbering spirit of Virginia will awake to know and embrace her own interests?

But yet, as long as there is hope of Virginia, that "she is not dead, but sleepeth," let her sons hear the voice which demands that they shall be satisfied with none but the highest acquirements. In the example which we have been contemplating, the young ministers of our church may see the importance, and the solemn obligation of aiming at the highest standard of

theological learning. If the church, if our Synods, would retain their respectability and influence, they must have a reserved *corps* of men, whose well-trained faculties, wide scholarship, and elevated character, will fit them to step at once into any of our places of trust and responsibility. Otherwise, we are reduced to one of two equally mortifying and ruinous alternatives, to commit those responsible posts to ill-furnished and incompetent men, who will betray the influence and character of our enterprises, in this age of honorable competition and vigorous progress in all other sections of our land, or else to go begging to other sections, to get such men as they can afford to spare us. Have these Synods such a body of reserved talent and learning now? If the valuable men, who now fill the professorships and presidencies of our Presbyterian Colleges and State Universities, were removed by death, could the Synods point with confidence to sons of theirs, and tell them to step into the breaches, and account them fitted to take up the fallen mantles? If the chairs of our Seminary were vacated, would or would not the Synods be at fault, in their search for successors, to whom they could confidently commit those important posts? When Dr. Sampson fell prematurely, did they feel that it was easy to find many men in their borders, from among whom to select his successor?

It is not necessary that these questions be answered here. There may be an evil in the church far more portentous than a stinted supply of ministers. It is that which comes, when her younger ministry are

satisfied with those more shallow attainments, which secure them a modicum of popular applause and favor, indolently recline upon the dependence of a facile and plausible pulpit talent, and relax those severer studies, by which the profound scholar is formed. It is an evil which strikes at the root of our prosperity, and when it prevails, can only be repaired at the root, and therefore, repaired tediously. For these surface men cannot even reproduce their kind, sorry as is their kind, and the general prevalence of such a type of ministerial acquirement renders inevitable a subsequent dearth of even second rate ministers, and a state of starveling dependence on other sections.

We therefore beseech our young brethren, as for our life, to imitate the noble example which God has mercifully given our Zion in our lost brother, and to resolve that they will be satisfied with nothing short of the fullest development of faculties, the soundest acquirements, and the most scriptural, humble and manly piety, which are within the reach of the most sustained diligence. This is no less the command of duty, than of a sanctified ambition. We are to love and serve God with all our heart, and mind, and strength, and soul. We are partially guilty of burying our talents, unless we prepare ourselves to meet the highest exigencies which are within the possibilities of our natural gifts.

In the life of Dr. Sampson, we see how directly that kind of scholarship which is usually esteemed least practical in a minister of the gospel, an extensive acquaintance with oriental literature, was made to sub-

serve the interests of the church—yea, how immediately and necessarily those interests would have suffered, for the lack of them.

If there is one thing proved by an experience of some twenty-five years, it is, that none but first rate men can now effectually subserve the institutions and interests of these Synods, in their prominent posts. To secure so many such men as they will need, there must be a liberal number, especially among their younger ministry, capable of the greatest things, from among whom they may choose. We do not expect to find plants of tallest and most vigorous growth among the few untimely shoots which spring up here and there in the season of wintry sterility. We expect to find them all puny, for the same reason which makes them few. And if one is found truly vigorous, it is a true *lusus naturæ*. We look for the full grown plant amidst the teeming abundance of the fruitful summer, and in the thickest part of a thick and emulous crop.

Unless we have, then, such a body of noble men, “whose hearts God hath touched,” we do not say our cause is lost, but we say that success, worthy of the cause, is impossible. The church expects every man to be the greatest he can be. She needs men who have begun, in the first place, by laying the foundation of a thorough and full academical course, which entirely transcends that scanty range of scholarship which is too often the limit of our collegiate courses; or else, if this is lacking, men who have repaired the lack by the herculean exertions of later years. Then, they must be men who superadd to this not only such

a theological training as will pass them creditably through Presbyteries, and suffice for the making of genteel little sermons, but a thorough and ever widening knowledge of the original languages of the Scriptures, and the doings and doctrines of the great masters of theology in all ages. They must also be men free from trivial but odious tricks of personal indulgence or weakness—men, whose directness of aim, whose humble dignity of character, whose self possession, whose fervent energy in doing good will impress and awe the popular mind. For, without these moral traits, brilliant faculties and acquirements will be to the church little more than splendid vexations. And last—they must be men whose eye is single, whose hearts and purposes are governed by a profound and steady love of God. Such was Francis S. Sampson. Would that all the sons of our church might be such. She has had no more pure, more symmetrical, more elevated example, to which she may point her young ministers and members, and say, “Be ye followers of him, even as he also was of Christ.”





S E R M O N S .



## SERMON I.

PROVERBS, XXIX, 1.—“ He that, being often reprov'd, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.”

IT is plain, from Scripture and from facts familiar to every observing and reflecting mind, that there is a controversy between man and his Maker. It is plain, too, that all the guilt of this controversy must be chargeable upon man; that, while its adjustment would be to his infinite gain, its continuance must result in his infinite loss; that God, on the other hand, is perfectly holy and happy in himself, altogether independent of the creature, who can neither add to his essential glory, nor detract from it in the least. And yet the history of redemption discloses this remarkable fact, that every proposal for a reconciliation of this difference has proceeded from God only, and that he has provided all the means necessary to secure it, while man has ever maintained the attitude of a thoughtless, sinful, and, if left to himself, persevering rejecter of all his proffers of peace.

It is my purpose, on the present occasion, to review some of the methods by which God administers his reproofs and presents his calls to a settlement of this controversy, and then to consider the *awful* consequences that must befall the man who, in the language of the text, “hardens his neck” against them.

I.—1. I observe, then, in the first place, that God frequently reproveth and loudly calls sinners by his *providences*.

These providences are both prosperous and adverse, merciful and afflictive; but strange to tell, the former greatly exceed the latter. Everywhere around us we see the bountiful goodness of God: daily we are ourselves the too thoughtless, thankless recipients of unnumbered blessings. God speaks to us for the most part kindly, and always in love. There are very few who do not experience more largely of his mercies than of his judgments: there is not one who does not receive infinitely more and better things than he deserves. Of his judgments we all see more than we suffer: of his mercies we all share freely, while we merit none.

The goodness of God invites us to repentance. He makes his appeals to our gratitude, to lead us back to obedience. We have forfeited his favor, but he manifests his unwillingness to cast us off, until the various expedients of his love have been tried. By unceasing kindness he would draw us back from the world, and gather our affections around himself. He would regain our confidence by constant displays of his forbearance and renewed evidences of his compassion.

But God also speaks to us by severer dispensations of his providence. These, as I have already said, we are oftener called upon to witness in others, and learn the lesson which they are designed to impart, without having it impressed upon us by sad experience of our own: but not unfrequently God does lay his hand

heavily upon ourselves, and warn us, in a way that we cannot but hear, if we will not heed. Our earthly fortunes are blasted in the full tide of enjoyment; our cherished hopes are disappointed in the near prospect of a happy consummation. Our best laid schemes are ever liable to defeat; our brightest anticipations often terminate in vanity. Health fails us in the vigor of our days, and in the hour of fancied security we are brought nigh to the grave. Friends desert us in the time of our greatest need; foes multiply when our means of defense are fewest and feeblest. Our nearest kindred are taken from our embrace, when our heart's affections are most entwined around them; the strongest ties that bind us to the world are often, in quick succession, severed forever.

I would affectionately ask my hearers, Are any of you strangers to these things? Is there one here to whom God has never spoken in some one or more of these and such like methods? Have his mercies been so multiplied to you and around you, that his judgments have been even far out of your sight? Has he never laid you on a bed of sickness, and taught you to feel that you ought to make your peace with him before the great day of his judgment shall come? Has he never impressed upon your mind the paramount importance of eternal things, and the high interest you have in laying up treasure in Heaven, by giving wings to your earthly riches, frustrating your worldly projects, disappointing your cherished hopes, or humbling your proud aspirations? Have you never seen the extremity in which you felt the need of a friend on high?

Has no near and endeared relation, perhaps the partner of your bosom, or the children of your love, the father or mother who gave you birth, or brother or sister, whom you loved as yourself—have none of these been torn from your fond embrace, and your affections left to linger around the tomb that enclosed their lifeless remains? My hearer, it was God who did it; and perhaps as to time and circumstances, more with reference to you than to the loved one whom, you may be permitted to hope, he has taken to himself. You needed the reproof; and though severe, it was given in kindness. God doth not willingly afflict. By these things he designs that men shall live, and in all these things, we ought to be able to say with Hezekiah of old, is the life of our spirits.

2. I observe, again, that God loudly and solemnly admonishes us by *his Word*.

Here he brings before us all those truths which we ought to know, and in every variety of form that we could desire, in order to arrest our attention and secure our salvation. The perfections of his holy character and the great principles of his government are clearly revealed. Our own sinful natures and helpless condition, together with the means of recovery, are fully exhibited. Duty is made plain, and all the motives are urgently pressed which ought to influence moral and intelligent creatures.

Without dealing longer in general statements, let me ask, who is it in this congregation that does not or may not know, from the Sacred Scriptures, that *God is a holy God*; that his government is a perfect govern-

ment—administered upon the eternal principles of justice and truth ; that sin is abominable in his sight, and can never pass with impunity, but must meet its desert in the offender or a substitute? Who is it that does not or may not know, from the Scriptures, that *he is himself a sinner*, by nature and by practice ; that the very thoughts of the imagination of his heart are only evil continually ; and that except a man be born again, by the almighty power of the Spirit, he cannot see the kingdom of God? Who is it that does not or may not know, from the Word of God, that there is *one only, but he an all-sufficient Saviour* ; that that Saviour has borne our sins in his own body on the tree, so that God can now be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus ; that in view of this great sacrifice for sin, the arms of mercy are wide extended to receive every returning penitent, and that *none* who come unto him shall in anywise be cast out? Who is it that does not or may not know, upon the authority of God's unerring Word, that there is a day appointed, in which the divine Saviour will sit enthroned in his glory, and *judge all nations* ; that the decisions of that great day are according to his own holy law, and with special reference to our acceptance or rejection of his proffered mercy ; and that those decisions are final and irreversible forever—so that Heaven or Hell must be the everlasting dwelling place of the soul, crowned with inconceivable and unfading glory, or wrapped in inextinguishable flames, and vexed with the torment of eternal despair?

Yes, my hearers—we know all, or may know, (and

if we do not, this is our sin and our folly,) we know, or may know all that we need to know. The grounds of difficulty between us and our Maker are clearly stated; the means of adjusting it are all provided and accessible; the invitations to a settlement loud, and affectionate, and full. And I would ask, What stronger appeals could be presented than are in the Word of God, to induce us to cease our rebellion and be reconciled to him? What more exceeding great and precious promises? What more terrible threats and tremendous sanctions? What more awfully solemn and soul stirring truths? Ah, my hearers, if all other proof were wanting, the fact that we can slumber, surrounded by light from Heaven disclosing matters like these, with the knowledge too that we must all very soon make the trial of their truth, would furnish an unanswerable argument for our deadness in sin, and consequent just exposure to the eternal condemnation of God.

But we pass on to speak of other methods of reproof; and

3. Observe, in the third place, that God admonishes us again and again by his *ministering servants*.

There are regions of the world, less favored than this, where this remark could not be made with truth. But let us not forget, my hearers, that it is the discussion of our own privileges and responsibilities which most of all concerns us.

God has been pleased not merely to devise and execute a plan of salvation, and make that plan known to us in his Word, but he has appointed an order of men



in the church, whose duty it is to study that Word, and press its great truths upon the attention and consciences of men. He well knew the appalling and death-like apathy that reigns naturally in our minds on the most important of all subjects, the salvation of our souls; that though our rebellion was against the God of Heaven, it was maintained not only with a high hand, but with a heart ruinously reckless of the consequences: and therefore, in addition to his Word, which would otherwise lie comparatively unread and unheeded, he has given us the ministry of reconciliation to reason with us, from that Word, of righteousness and temperance and judgment to come: to urge upon us continually its solemn admonitions and reproofs: to make known the way of life which it reveals; and, in the name of the great Redeemer himself, to entreat men to be reconciled and saved: to publish peace from God to all who submit to the terms of his mercy, and to point out the terrible overthrow of those who despise his Son, their Saviour, and madly and wickedly persevere in their rebellion.

As the ambassador of God, I stand before you this day; and, in his name, I solemnly ask, how often have you met his accredited ministers, and heard from their lips the message which he sent you—respectfully perhaps, but with no earnest heed—or, it may be, with thoughtless trifling and frivolous behavior in the very sanctuary of his holiness! Who that hears me has not often heard, from the sacred desk, the holy requirements of God's law, and the gracious invitations of his Gospel? Who that hears me has not witnessed,

in the outward administration of water, the significant representation of that inward purification without which no man shall see God; and in the simple but impressive ceremonial of the Supper, the evident memorial of that awful decease which was accomplished at Jerusalem, when the blood of the Son of God was shed for the remission of sins? To these repeated warnings I add another, and I beg you to remember that mercies misimproved cease to be blessings, and turn into curses. You have, my hearers, like Capernaum of old, been exalted to Heaven in point of privilege—may you not receive her doom! Had you never heard a sermon before, and should you never hear one again, you have heard enough this day to render you utterly without excuse when you stand before the bar of God! This indeed, the Scriptures tell us, will be the case with those who never so much as heard that a Saviour had died for the redemption of sinners; how much more with those upon whose ears these glad tidings fall like the words of a tale a thousand times told, and to whose heart Heaven and Hell make almost no appeal, from very familiarity to the thought!

4. But these are all monitors without. God has given us two faithful ones within. The *first* which I mention, is *natural conscience*.

There is in every man a moral sense or conscience, which sits supreme amongst the faculties of his soul, and approves as right or condemns as wrong his feelings and thoughts and words and actions. It is not indeed always right nor equally acute in its decisions; nor does it always give the same verdict in different

or even in the same individuals; but to deny its existence for this reason, as some do, is to go contrary to the plainest dictates of every man's consciousness. We all have this witness for God within us; and whether well or ill informed, whether right or wrong in its decisions, those decisions are according to what it believes to be the will of God, for whose rights it always pleads. As well may we deny the existence of reason, or any other faculty or operation of the soul, as to call in question this most deeply seated and commanding amongst them all. It may be stifled, or stupified, or seared as with a hot iron; but we believe that the man is yet to be found who is of sane mind, and yet wholly destitute of a conscience. It may even approve where it ought to condemn, or condemn where it ought to approve; but it is not therefore the less really a judge of all that we feel and think and say and do: nor will it either approve what it believes to be wrong, or condemn what it believes to be right: nor will it ever be satisfied while we do not respect its decisions.

Of the existence of such a faculty or operation of the soul as I have described, we all have the highest evidence of which our nature admits—I mean our own consciousness. So true is this, that we assume it to be in every man around us; and we respect or despise others according as they appear to respect or despise the authority of this internal monitor and judge.

To bring this matter home, my hearers, let me ask, Who in this audience will admit that he has no con-

science? That there is nothing within which distinguishes between good and evil, however outwardly he may confound them? That there is no principle in his nature which pleads the cause of God and right, and creates a clamor in the soul when these are wronged and outraged? You cannot do it. Conscience itself will not allow it. Well do you know its terrible upbraidings for wickedness which, perhaps, the world knows nothing of, but which, conscience tells, is known to God, whose righteous judgment you cannot escape. Well do you know its daily remonstrances for secret, it may not be heinous, and yet it may be *heinous* sins. Well do you know the disquietude which you often feel under its convictions of guilt, when, at the same time, you remember that you must soon die, and that you have neither found nor sought an interest in the Saviour's blood. Well do I know that your consciences occupy the ground that I assert this day and at this moment, when I tell you that it is not one of your least enormous sins that you have so often and so long withstood every call of God's grace to flee from the wrath to come, and, despite all the convictions of your better judgment, have gone on in thoughtlessness, and worldliness, and sin, at the risk every hour of your soul's eternal undoing. In vain do you say, peace! There can be none that is worth the name, till you find it in the settled controversy that is between you and God. To that settlement conscience urges whenever you give it the opportunity to speak, and often when you would be glad to hush its voice: and if at last you appear before the

bar of God an enemy unreconciled and peace not made, conscience, you well know, will be your most bitter accuser, pleading guilty to all the charges that shall then be read from God's book of remembrance, and to none more loudly than this, that you knew your duty but did it not.

5. But there is a higher and holier monitor still who condescends to dwell with men, and call them to repentance of their sins and peace with God. This monitor is the Holy Spirit of God, proceeding from the Father and the Son.

“It is expedient for you, (said our Saviour to his disciples in his last address, just before his crucifixion,) it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.”

This, my hearers, if I may so speak, next to his Son, is God's best gift to men. The Spirit comes to finish what the Son began; or rather to apply and seal the benefits which he, by his obedience and death, had purchased for his people.

How he operates we pretend not to know; but this we do know from the Word of God, that it is the Spirit who alone works efficaciously and always powerfully in the hearts of men, and presents his other and oft repeated calls in such a way as partially, or wholly and savingly, to awaken them to duty. It is an opinion of the older writers, not easily controverted, that

all the virtue that is in the world is to be ascribed to the Spirit of God; that but for the restraining and impelling power of his grace, we should all be outright and at once devils incarnate, devouring and devoured of one another, and doomed of course to eternal death!

Abstract from the heart of man the grace of God—which in this case can only be the work and influence of the Holy Spirit—and may be called common grace, because, under the present peculiar dispensation of suspended justice, that mercy may have its course, all men share it in greater or less degree—abstract, I say, this grace from the heart of man, and what have we left but the original curse of unmitigated spiritual death, fitting us for all the deeds of darkness to which we shall be freely competent whenever God shall, as at any time he justly may, remove us from our present favored state to that world of woe where grace no longer restrains and moves, and death triumphantly reigns?

These views show how little credit we may take to ourselves for any virtue that pertains to our character, since in this respect we are what we are by the grace of God, and can credit to ourselves only our sins. And yet some men are relying here alone for justification before God! Not upon free grace in Christ, but upon their own works; though these, as far as there is in them “any virtue and any praise,” are themselves the product of God’s gracious Spirit!

To these common operations of the Spirit then, acting through the medium of our understandings and

consciences, are we to ascribe all those movements within us which we all sometimes feel towards a reformation of our lives, and addressing ourselves in good earnest to the work of our salvation. They cannot come from Satan, who never aims to produce a salutary impression upon the heart. They cannot come from ourselves, since but for the grace of God we should, like devils, be utterly destitute of every semblance of a principle of spiritual life, utterly bereft of the faintest feature of the image of God which we originally wore. They proceed from the Spirit of God, which ever strives with man, more or less powerfully, until he is either savingly converted, or in just retribution for his waywardness and folly, he is abandoned to hardness and blindness, and, as we may suppose, to speedy death. It is this Spirit of the living God, that impresses upon our minds and hearts the appeals of his providence and word and ministers, and gives life and energy to the remonstrances of conscience. He is not restricted in his operations to times, nor places, nor persons. Sometimes he moves the assembled multitude to enquire what they must do to be saved—sometimes he arouses the solitary slumberer to cry out at midnight for mercy. At one time it is the preaching, at another the reading of the Word which he causes to arrest attention and awaken feeling. At others, it may be, in deep retirement and without any outward exciting cause, the sinner is made to take alarm at his very thoughtlessness in the midst of so much guilt and danger. A general awakening is often spread through a whole community; while

at other times, two may be grinding at the same mill, and one be taken, but the other left.

Have you, my hearer, never witnessed such things as these? Are you yourself an utter stranger to these strivings of the Spirit—it may be, by other methods and in other circumstances? Has he never followed you, as if loath to give you up, into the very haunts of vice, and inscribed upon the door posts, “This is the way to Hell, going down to the chambers of death!” Has he never checked the giddy thought by the recollection that God was present and you immortal? Has he never disturbed your peaceful pursuit of the world, by raising the question, “What shall it profit, if you gain it all and lose your soul?” Have you never been almost persuaded to be a Christian? Have you never found it hard to get your full consent to let some favored season pass, and you remain unsaved? Have you never feared that the Spirit grieved and once departed, would never more return and leave you forever undone? Oh have you never dreaded the bitter lamentation, “The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and I am not saved!” Have you never secretly prayed, “Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!” Say, fellow sinner,

“Hath something met thee in thy path  
Of worldliness and vanity,  
And pointed to the coming wrath,  
And warned thee from that wrath to flee?

Sinner, it was a heavenly voice,  
It was the Spirit's gracious call;  
It bade thee make the better choice,  
And haste to seek in Christ thine all.



Spurn not the call to life and light ;  
 Regard in time the warning kind :  
 That call thou may 'st not always slight,  
 And yet the gate of mercy find.

God's Spirit will not always strive  
 With hardened, self-destroying man.  
 Ye who persist his love to grieve,  
 May never hear his voice again."

II. This leads me (in the second place) to consider briefly the awful result of "hardening the neck" against all the reproofs and calls of God's grace.

I need not stop to tell what is meant by "hardening the neck against God." Have you thus far resisted every admonition, and are you this day refusing the invitations of his mercy? Then have you up to this very hour been doing the very thing. God only knows how much longer you may persevere; how much oftener you may turn a deaf ear to his remonstrances, before that overtakes you which is threatened in the text. "He that being often reprov'd, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy."

1. *He shall be destroyed.* God hath said it, and who shall reverse it? I know, my hearers, that we like to lay the flattering unction to ourselves, that all will be well; at least, better than we had feared: that we are pleased to hear soft and smooth things from the sacred desk. But God forbid that I should pervert his message, or lighten the burden of his word! "I am against the prophets, saith the Lord, that steal my Word, every one from his neighbor. Behold, I am against the prophets, saith the Lord, that smooth their

tongues and say, He saith, Behold I am against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the Lord, and do tell them, and cause my people to err by their lies and by their lightness: yet I sent them not, nor commanded them." I solemnly admonish you, then, my hearer, whoever you be that art making light of the reproofs of the Lord, that destruction from God is in the way before you. Go on, and you will overtake it. "God is not man, that he should lie; nor the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it; or, hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?"

2. But "he that hardeneth his neck" shall not only certainly, but "*suddenly be destroyed.*"

God is merciful, but he is also just: he is long suffering, but his anger, when it does kindle, is kindled quickly. He does not threaten *speedy* (mark the distinction,) but *sudden* destruction: it may be long deferred, but when it does come, it "cometh like the whirlwind." Under the dispensation of his grace, sentence against an evil work is not often speedily executed; and therefore the hearts of men may be fully set in them to do evil. But, my hearers, though delayed in mercy to you, the execution is none the less sure; and though judgment may slumber for a season, it will one day break forth and fall upon the sinner with terrific haste! Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, but it shall not be well with the wicked. The Lord is a jealous God, and a revenger. He will take ven-

geance on his adversaries, and he reserveth wrath for his enemies. The Lord is slow to anger, and great in power, but will not at all acquit the wicked. He hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet. The mountains quake, the hills melt, and the earth is burnt at his presence. Who can stand before his indignation? Who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? His fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him!

Such, my hearers, is the prophet's description of his coming. Can you venture to meet him as you are? Will you close your eyes against the signs, and your ears against the warnings that he gives you, and go recklessly forward till his judgment shall surprise you like a thief in the night, and there shall be none to deliver? For,

3. Observe, in conclusion, that he that hardeneth his neck shall be destroyed, not only suddenly, but *without remedy*.

There is a period in our progress in sin, my hearer, it is a most solemn truth! beyond which the mercy of God goes no longer with us. Then our ruin becomes remediless. Not that the mercy of God is so limited that it cannot, in view of the atonement of Christ, cover sins of any magnitude and in any multitude—but that God has, in his infinite wisdom and justice, himself fixed the limit to which the sinner may go in the violation of his law and abuse of his mercies—but not beyond, without sealing his eternal doom! At that point the Lord says, My Spirit shall not always strive! And then there is no more hope! Where this

limit is in any man's life we pretend not to say: God only knoweth, as it belongs to him alone to say where mercy shall end and justice begin. Perhaps few reach it before death, but for aught we know, many pass it long before.

In this view of the subject, my hearers, destruction comes literally in a moment, and is irreversible forever. One last neglected opportunity or call fills up the measure, and God says, Let him alone! The heart is henceforward steeled against every persuasion, and the Spirit of God, aggrieved, takes its everlasting flight. The man may have no very awful forebodings; but his end draweth nigh, and he cannot escape. Often did wisdom cry without, and utter her voice in the street in the chief places of concourse—saying, “How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity, and the scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge? Turn you at my reproof.” But every invitation has been spurned, every warning unheeded, every privilege abused: and now justice ascends the throne. “Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded: but ye have set at naught all my counsel and despised all my reproof. I also will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh. When your fear cometh as desolation and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish come upon you, then shall ye call upon me, but I will not answer. Ye shall seek me early, but ye shall not find me: for that ye hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord; ye would hear none of

my counsel; ye despised all my reproof; therefore shall ye eat of the fruit of your own way, and be filled with your own devices." The ruin now is final and complete. There is no means of removing or mitigating the sufferings of the soul. There is no Saviour to heave off the dreadful weight of divine wrath—no Lazarus to dip his finger in water and cool the parched tongue!

My hearer, have you made your peace with God? Or, having neglected it, will you do it? As his ambassador, I make the proclamation of peace. What message shall the waiting angels, the ministers of the Great King, bear back to the Court of Heaven? Ye messengers of the living God, report it not to the King of Heaven, that this is a stiff-necked people, who harden their hearts against him!

Let us look to the God of mercy, that his anger kindle not against us, and we be consumed in his wrath!

## SERMON II.

PSALM LXXXV, 6.—“Wilt thou not revive us again, that thy people may rejoice in thee.”

THAT the present is *a season of great spiritual declension*, I presume no one will deny. The absence of the Spirit of God from the great majority of the churches, unprofitable preaching and barren ordinances, the conformity of christian professors to the world, their want of religious life and comfort and joy, the prevalent indifference of sinners, their hardness and even daring resistance of the truth, and their warm pursuit of the world in all its forms, impress our minds, and forbid us to close our eyes upon the mournful fact. We may take up the lamentation of the psalmist, “Will the Lord cast off forever, and will he be favorable no more? Is his mercy clear gone forever? Doth his promise fail forever more? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies?”

Such a state ought to be distressing in the extreme to the christian and the philanthropist: and a revival is most desirable and needful. That we may feel it to be so, let us

I. *Consider the subject in its relation to our country.* And here observe,

1. First the *political engrossment* of our people.

National and state affairs largely affect individual interests, and every man in our republican country is a politician. The most momentous and intricate questions of peace and war find their way to every fireside, excite feelings in every breast, and elicit discourse from every tongue. The prolific press keeps political topics in perpetual contact with the public mind. The politics of the nation, and I may say of the world, form one great absorbing theme with all the people, and often exclude feeling and thought and action in what *vastly* more, and more *directly*, concerns their individual welfare.

It must be so. We cannot change it. But we want something to go with it, side by side, into every community, into every family, and into every heart. Yea, we want some powerful principle to preoccupy and permanently engross the mind, and give healthful direction to feeling and passion, the basis of all action. We want something to restrain ambition and covetousness, intrigue and fraud and corruption, in the government and in the people, and to diffuse, through all ranks and departments of the nation, industry and integrity, order and peace, the fear of God and the love of man.

Religion only can do it—the holy religion of our Lord Jesus Christ. Our help, my hearers, is in God only, and to him we should direct our prayer, “Wilt thou not revive us again, that thy people may rejoice in thee?”

2. Consider, secondly, *the rapid increase of our population*, unparalleled in the history of any people. Al-

ready we number about twenty-five millions of inhabitants, and doubling as we do, in little more than twenty years, before the present century has closed, we shall have one hundred millions spread over our soil. These all have souls—souls by nature estranged from God, and dead in sin. Long ere this the faithful, who are now in the earth, will have failed from amongst us; and without the life-giving power of the Spirit, we shall be left a nation without God, ready for destruction!

Religion, my hearers—true religion before God—is our great bulwark of defense. If Christ shall make us free, we shall be free indeed. Where his Spirit is, there is liberty, and there is life. But where this inward, spiritual liberty is wanting, the outward form cannot long subsist. A nation of slaves to lust has already lost its highest and truest freedom, and hastens to its doom. The fear of God is the beginning and the perfection of wisdom. This is true of nations as well as individuals. It is righteousness which exalteth a nation, while sin is a reproach to any people; and if in any case, in the strong language of Scripture, a land "*vomiteth* out her inhabitants," it is because the land is defiled by their iniquities and their abominations.

Let, then, the influences of the Spirit of God upon our people cease; let our borders enlarge, and our people multiply, and iniquity prevail: and where shall the next generation be found? If we would produce the leaven of religion amongst us, the spirit of life must dwell in the churches. If we would keep up



the present proportion of religious influence to our growing population—and who will say that we *can do* with less—we must have the *reviving* influences of the Spirit amongst us. We cannot with any safety remain still. Our population is striding rapidly onward. We want something to go with it. We want in the people the wisdom of God and the power of God. This is the Gospel; and we want this in every heart. Now, my hearers, God's Spirit alone can put it there. Let us, therefore, direct our prayer unto him, "Wilt thou not revive us again, that thy people may rejoice in thee?"

3. Consider, thirdly, *the extensive spread of popery and other errors over our land.*

The Roman Catholics report about two millions of our people as regular communicants in their church; and claim at least an equal number as more or less under their influence. The principal source of their rapid increase is the constant heavy importation from Europe of a population wholly unacquainted with our institutions, accustomed at home to strong restraint, and ignorant of the right use and enjoyment of freedom. To these the Bible, which is at once the foundation and the bulwark of our liberties, is a book prohibited as dangerous to be read in the vulgar tongue. And look where we may, we find errors springing up, and prevailing more or less extensively all over our land. These all proceed from darkness and corruption, and are more or less mischievous in their operation. Some of them reach down to the very foundations of social existence, disturbing long established

and well tried maxims of wisdom and religion, and substituting in their stead the ruinous dogmas of a carnal philosophy or the intolerant fury of fanatic philanthropy. Of many the whole and legitimate work is to disorganize, and to pull down and to destroy whatever is fair and good, and ought to be firm and fixed in politics and religion.

What power, my hearers, can stay the progress and restrain the wicked working of all these, but the power of God? And what agency does he employ to set right what is wrong in man, and to set bounds to his folly and wickedness, so all pervasive and effective as that of religion? It is *this* that we want—a powerful and universal revival of pure and undefiled religion. And when our hearts are saddened at the prospect of the desolations of ignorance and error, and sin of every form and degree, let us remember that in *God* is our help, and to *Him* let us direct our prayer, “Wilt thou not revive us again, that thy people may rejoice in thee?”

4. Consider this subject, fourthly, *in connection with the destitution of ministers.*

In West Hanover Presbytery, consisting of some thirty-five or forty ministers, after allowing a fair proportion of the population to other evangelical denominations, we have seventy-five thousand souls dependent upon us (Presbyterians) for the ministrations of the Word of Life. Of these, allowing (what is largely above the fact) that fifteen thousand attend regularly in our churches, we have remaining sixty thousand souls, who are without the Word, and to a

large extent desecrators of the Sabbath. The city of Philadelphia has long been regarded as a sort of *head quarters* to Presbyterianism; and yet a few years ago the corresponding secretary of our board of education reported, that if we allowed eight hundred hearers over ten years of age in every church of all denominations, orthodox or heterodox, there would yet be one hundred and twenty thousand souls above ten years of age, left out, without even a place of worship. If such be the statistics furnished by the most favored spots and portions of our country, what should we hear from our most distant frontier, where states and territories are almost yearly added? The deep and heavy tide, too, of our population, is, as we have already seen, rapidly rolling onward, and has already bounded over to the Pacific coast. And yet the alarming cry of a decrease, or the scarcely more encouraging announcement of "a *small increase*" in the number of our candidates for the ministry, is from year to year, resounded in our ears. Our own Synod reported in 1842 to the General Assembly, nineteen candidates; in 1843, twenty; in 1844, twenty; in 1845, sixteen; in 1846, ten; in 1847, the same; in 1848, twelve; in 1849, sixteen; in 1850, ten; 1852, ten. Average from 1842 to 1845, eighteen and three-quarters. Average from 1846 to 1850, eleven and three-fifths.

We say nothing, then, of the millions of destitute souls in foreign lands. We point to the wide spread and still spreading population of our own country—to the thousands of our own land, who are as sheep without shepherds: and then, saying nothing yet of the

soul in the world to come, but limiting our views to the operation of such a state of things upon the present and future interests of our country, we solemnly and earnestly ask, What shall we do without revivals of religion? Let the still small but authoritative voice of the Spirit be heard no more in our schools, and academies, and colleges; let his life giving and sanctifying influences be withheld from the community and from the churches; let, as a necessary and speedy consequence, the pulpit become vacant and the voice of the ambassador of God be no more lifted to warn and invite the ungodly, and to comfort and encourage and establish the faithful: then tell me, how long our fair republic and boasted liberties shall stand, and we continue an orderly and prosperous and happy people, as we are, above all the nations of the earth? Truly, my hearers, we have a goodly heritage; but as its foundations were deeply laid in principles taught in the Word of God, so must the superstructure be firmly united in all its parts by the same divine and imperishable truths, or the whole must ultimately fall into ruins. How, then, ought our whole nation, as with one heart and one voice, to cry out unto God—the God of liberty and the God of nations—“wilt thou not revive us again, that thy people may rejoice in thee?”

II. The view of this subject, which we have thus far taken, makes its appeal alike to the patriot and to the christian. But *it has its special bearings upon the latter, which we propose, in the second place, to consider.*

1. And first, *its bearing upon the walk of christians.*

It is the will of our Saviour that christians be the salt of the earth and the light of the world. Why else does he leave them in the world, and not take them at once home to himself? It is by these metaphors that he himself designates them, and indicates the hallowed savor and redeeming influence that they should diffuse over all around them. They are elsewhere compared to leaven, which continues to spread till the whole lump is leavened: and they are declared to be "the epistles of Christ, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God." They are represented as "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that they should show forth the praises (or, in the margin, the virtues) of him who hath called them out of darkness into his marvelous light." They are called the people of God, bought by the precious price of the blood of his Son, "who gave himself for them, that he might redeem them from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

Surely, my hearers, if we be the people of God, we ought to show ourselves to be such. The Saviour demands it. We have covenanted with God, in the presence of men and of angels, to do it; and the world expects it of us, and have the right to expect it. We make high professions. God is our father by adoption into his family. Jesus Christ is our King and our Saviour, and our all sufficient help. The Holy Ghost dwells in us as in his own temple, to purge out all iniquity, and, by his mighty power, subdue us wholly unto God. We profess to have renounced the world,

to have chosen the service of God, and to live for eternity and for Heaven. Surely there ought to be a difference between the children of light and the children of darkness; between those who are alive unto righteousness and those who are dead in sin; between those who renounce the world and live for Heaven, and those who love the world and pursue its shadows; between those who have the mighty power of the Holy Ghost within them, and those in whom, as the children of disobedience, the prince of darkness works and reigns.

How sad is the time when these high professions are disregarded as empty and vain: when these solemn vows, which bind us to God, are forgotten and broken: when these holy and distinguishing privileges are neglected and powerless: when the line of demarcation between saints and sinners is nearly or wholly effaced, and the christian is seen breaking over the bounds which God has set to him, and joining with the thoughtless and deluded multitude in swift and hot pursuit after the deceitful vanities of earth! Oh! how much better to see him living above the world: to see him, by a holy life, separating himself from sinners: to see him true to his professions, and true to his vows, and true to his God, and true to himself, and true to his fellow-men, everywhere and at all times and in all things showing a burning desire for the salvation of souls, an indomitable zeal for the glory of Christ and the prosperity of his kingdom, a holy deadness to earth, and a life hid with Christ in God!

But how shall it be? How shall this sad slumber,

like the sleep of death, pass away, and God's people awake to a new and vigorous spiritual life? There is nothing too hard for the Lord, and in *him* is our help. In our need and our distress let us look unto him, "Wilt thou not revive us again; that thy people may rejoice in thee?"

2. But again—*this subject has its bearings upon the enjoyment of christians.*

We bless God, that our religion is not properly one of gloomy austerities, and lifeless forms, and heartless and joyless duties. Blessed be God, that the more we have of it, and the more we yield ourselves to its control, the more our peace abounds—peace passing all understanding; and the more our joys are multiplied—joys unspeakable and full of glory. Blessed be God, that whilst this happiness is such as the world cannot bestow, it is such as the world cannot destroy: that even our penitence for sins, and our toils and pains and persecutions for Jesus' sake, are full of life and health and peace and joy to the soul.

But oh! how sad to see the christian turning from the fountain of living waters to the broken cisterns that can hold none! to see him so dead to the unspeakable joys of a spiritual life in Christ Jesus, that he turns to the world to satisfy with carnal things the earnest cravings of the immortal soul! to see him so insensible to the exquisite pleasures of doing good, that he resorts even to doubtful, and sometimes sinful expedients, first to get and then to hold his earthly gains!—in a word, to see him so blind as to join hand in hand with sinners to seek in the creature what, it is

an immutable law of Heaven, shall be found in the Creator alone!

How much more desirable is it to see in every professing christian an ardent lover of his God, full of joyful hope and trust, a devoted follower of the Saviour, glorying, like the apostle, in distresses for his sake—a temple of the Holy Ghost, resplendent with the beauties of holiness and peace—a true, firm, and faithful christian, wearing the outward expression of inward peace with God, and of constant and confident expectancy of rest and rejoicing and inconceivable glory in the new and heavenly Jerusalem above.

God, my hearers, can do even this for us, and would be sought of by us to do it for us. While, therefore, we mourn over our worldly conformity, and grieve over our guilt that we have so little experience of the joys of his salvation, let us lift up our hearts in prayer unto him, “Wilt thou not revive us again, that thy people may *rejoice* in thee!”

3. This subject has also *its bearings upon the reward of christians.*

Thanks be unto God, he requires no man to serve him for nought. “The wicked worketh a deceitful work,” i. e. a work that shall disappoint him, “but to him that soweth righteousness, shall be a sure reward.” And oh! how great is that reward! Who can tell what degrees of *glory* there are in Heaven for those who love and serve their God with faithfulness and diligence even unto death? As it is written, “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.”



How small in comparison would all this world be, if the attainment were possible, to its eager votaries! Yet how hard do they toil from day to day, and every day of all their lives, that they may get but a small portion of it at the most, and that uncertain at the best! They toil and strive, and yet perhaps die at last without enough to give them a decent interment! How poor is the service and how uncertain the rewards of this vain world!

But to see a christian turning from the service of God, and from seeking after the high glories of Heaven, to vie with sinners in the pursuit of the world—oh! how sad is it! What miserable folly is that which would sacrifice one degree of attainable glory at the right hand of God in Heaven forever, for all the wealth, and all the honors, and all the knowledge, and all the pleasure, that this poor world can possibly bestow upon its most favored votary during his short stay upon earth! And yet, my hearer, supposing that you are indeed a christian, who can tell how much of Heaven you have already relinquished, and relinquished forever, by loitering and dozing—to use no stronger expressions—during so much of your past life as a christian! We receive according to what we have done. Will you go on, and relinquish yet more? Is not your loss already enough? And is it not high time to awake out of sleep, and, reaching forth unto those things which are before, ought you not to be *pressing* toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus? Oh! can you afford, or can you consent, to exchange more of heaven for earth than

you have already done? Forbid it, Lord! Let every christian heart here cry out unto God, "Wilt thou not revive us again, that thy people may rejoice in thee!"

III. But *our subject has a most solemn bearing upon sinners.*

We look around us at such a time as this, and what do we see? Countless numbers on every side, who, utterly regardless to all appearance of their eternal interests, eagerly press on to seize what they may of earthly good. God seems not to be in all their thoughts. Heaven and Hell are empty sounds, which have ceased either to attract or to alarm. Eternity appears to be of no moment compared with time: the soul sinks into insignificance in comparison with the body. The Heavens become as brass above our heads and the earth as iron beneath our feet: but their hearts remain hard and unmoved. Disease visits almost every household; death cuts down one and another of the aged and the young, who lift their dying voice to admonish and entreat: but all in vain. God's providences are misinterpreted or unheeded. His ministers sound the alarm; but all ears are deaf. Christ is set forth in visible emblems as crucified for sin, the Saviour that they need: but they still cry, by acts louder than words, "Away with him! We will not have this man to reign over us; and we desire not the knowledge of his ways." Nay, brethren, we answer from the pulpit, Do not so wickedly; God sees, and hears, and takes knowledge, and will hold to account: hear him, and you shall live forever; despise

his mercy, and you perish quickly and beyond redemption! And again, we hear the cry, by acts louder than words, Away with him, away with him! And give us the world, the world, the world!

We look again, and what do we see? We see in this careless throng our own neighbors and friends and kindred. One sees his wife—the wife of his youth. Another her husband—the hope of her days. One sees a darling child—the occasion of many a tear and of many a joy. Another an aged parent perhaps, still living in the world, but no longer able to enjoy it, and already tottering into the tomb! One beholds his sister—it may be the giddiest of the most gay. Another his brother—possibly the ringleader of the most reckless. All see fewer or more that they love—some, perhaps many, that they ought to love dearly: these all choosing the world, none seeking after God! And yet perhaps each one of the beholders has offered few believing prayers, uttered few faithful remonstrances, and put forth little effort to arrest the onward and headlong march of even those who are nearest and dearest to them!

We turn, and look again, and where are they? They are gone, all gone to the grave! And oh! could mortal hand uplift the veil that hides from mortal eyes the great realities of eternity, what should we see? Turn over the truth speaking pages of this sacred volume, and read, and know: and as you read, think of the lake, and the worm, and the fire, and the brimstone, and the smoke, and the torment, and the weeping, and the wailing, and the gnashing of teeth!

But can nothing be done to break their delusion, and save them from this dreadful end? Our best answer, perhaps, is that of the prophet when asked by the Lord, "Can these bones live?"—"O Lord God, thou knowest." Man's strength is weakness here. But nothing is too hard for God; and he will be enquired of to do it for us. Let him breathe upon these slain, and they shall live. The thoughtless will become serious, the sleepers will be awakened; the backsliders will be reclaimed, the prodigal restored, the spiritually dead quickened into new life, and perhaps even the hardened apostate renewed unto repentance. Then, do we mourn to behold transgressors, and to know their dreadful end? Oh! let us look to him from whom cometh all saving help, and plead, with the psalmist, "Wilt thou not revive us again, that thy people may rejoice in thee!"

IV. We conclude with the consideration that *this subject is closely connected with the declarative glory of God.*

To glorify God, and to enjoy him forever, we are taught, is the chief end of man. Both these go together, and are alike the consequence of the life giving and reviving influences of the Spirit of God. Doubtless amongst the works of God, all glorious as they are, that of redeeming love and mercy furnishes the highest exhibition of his glorious perfection. We hesitate not to believe and to assert that the redemption of one soul by the blood of Jesus Christ, raising it from a state of sin and condemnation before God to one of holiness and acceptance in his sight, more glori-

fies God than the creation and garniture of a new and untainted world. The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth his handy work ; but these shall perish and pass away, while the work of redemption shall stand ; and every soul that is renewed, and pardoned, and sanctified, and saved, shall remain an everlasting monument to the praise of all the glorious perfections of its Saviour, God.

Would we then glorify God and enjoy him forever, to the utmost of our capacities, let us seek the constant reviving influences of his spirit in our hearts, without which we can do nothing, and all about us must perish. Seeing, therefore, that the brightest manifestation of his glory and the highest consummation of our own happiness stand so intimately and so harmoniously united, let us all hasten to embrace Christ and his great salvation ; and that this may be realized, let every heart unceasingly pour out its prayer before God, “Wilt thou not revive us again, that thy people may rejoice in thee !”

May he grant it, for Christ's sake !

### SERMON III.

ACTS, XVI, 30.—“Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”

THE history of this text has been read, and is doubtless familiar to you all. In obedience to a vision from Heaven, Paul had gone over into Macedonia to preach the Gospel. During his ministry, together with Silas, at Philippi, a chief city of the country, they met with a certain damsel who was possessed of a spirit of divination. Such possessions of the devil were common in those days. For many days together this unfortunate young woman, who was the source of much gain to her masters, followed Paul and his company, saying, “These men are the servants of the most High God, which show unto us the way of salvation.” This knowledge she, of course, received from the Spirit of God; who was further graciously pleased, through the agency of Paul, to deliver her from her bondage to Satan, and restore her to a sound mind and to the liberty of the children of God. When her masters saw that the hope of their gain was gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and drew them into the market place unto the rulers and magistrates, saying, “These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city, and teach customs which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans.” And the multitude rose up together against them, and the magistrates rent off

their clothes, and commanded to beat them. And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely; who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks. But, blessed be God! stocks cannot stifle praise, nor prison walls restrain the spirit and the power of prayer! At midnight Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises unto God. And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken, and all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed. The keeper of the prison, awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, and supposing the prisoners had fled, drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, but that Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, "Do thyself no harm, for we are all here." Then he called for a light and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out, and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" He saw the truth of what the possessed damsel had said, "These men are the servants of the most High God, who show unto us the way of salvation;" and conscience smitten for his sins, which provoked the wrath of that God whose power had shaken the foundations and unbarred the doors of the prison, he falls at the feet of his servants, and earnestly implores that they will teach him the way to escape from the ruin that impends over his soul. And they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house."

A more important question, my hearers, obviously was never asked; and the trembling anxiety and earnestness with which the jailer propounded it, well became the interests which it involved. It is not one of those questions which concern the present life merely, and then mainly the body, to which the men of the world, by a common consent, allow an importance which absorbs all the energies of body and soul for life; but it is one which rises infinitely above and reaches infinitely beyond them. It is not, What shall we eat? and, What shall we drink? and, Where-withal shall we be clothed? These shall *soon* concern us no more, and *now* they do it too much. But it is, "What shall I do to be saved?" a question for every man and woman of our degenerate and ruined race, involving the interests of soul and body both, the extent and magnitude of which will not be known till eternity has disclosed what blessedness and glory are summed up in Heaven, and what anguish and horror are bound up in Hell!

The text calls directly for an exhibition of the *way and terms of salvation*, and I have selected it because I hope there are not wanting those amongst my hearers who feel a deep and reasonable concern on this great subject.

In order the better to understand it, it will be necessary to lay down some fundamental truths, which, I think, will require but little extension of remark to make *them* plain and to secure *your* assent. I observe, then,

I. In the *first* place, that God is a perfect God, and his government a perfect government.



Every moral and physical attribute, which is necessary to the perfection of the divine character and to the maintenance of the divine government, he possesses in an infinite degree. He is holy, and merciful, and just: and whilst all his purposes are sovereign and untrammelled by any creature, they never conflict with any one of his exalted attributes, and are always executed with unerring truth and exactness. His laws, therefore, are perfect laws, and they will be perfectly enforced. As they all have in view the good of the creature and the glory of the Creator, so must their binding authority be universally acknowledged and their righteous requirements be fully met. Under his holy administration, there is no possibility of evading their force. They must be obeyed, or the transgressor must suffer the punishment adequate, in the divine mind, to the heinousness of every offence, against His “holy and just and good” law. The truly righteous—which can only be affirmed of angels that never fell, are not more certain to stand approved and blessed in his sight than are sinners to be banished forever from his presence with his curse pursuing and pressing upon them, unless there be a Saviour who can stay the operation of divine justice against them, and open the way for the exercise of mercy. Witness the case of Devils.

Thus is it *with God*: how is it *with man*? In answer to this, I observe,

II. In the *second* place, that men are all, by nature, depraved and guilty rebels before God!

There is not one who has kept his law. “Not a

just man upon earth, that doeth good and sinneth not!" Need I stop to prove what is confirmed by every man's conscience in his own case, and by universal observation of the lives of others? One glimpse of the divine law—binding alike on angels and men—in all its length and breadth, ought to confound the Pharisee, and stop every mouth before God! "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength." This is the first commandment. Have you kept it? The second is like it: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Have you done it? Let conscience answer, and we have the verdict, already recorded in the Scriptures, "All the world is guilty before God! We have all gone aside; have all come short: and there is none righteous; none that seeketh after God; none that doeth good—no, not one!" This verdict we cannot escape: and the sentence of God against all evil doers must, therefore, certainly impend over us, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die!" And though the full and regular *execution* of judgment may for a while delay, it will come—and when it does, it will do its work in righteousness.

But this is not all. Our carnal minds are enmity against God. The desires of our hearts are opposed to his holy will. His law imposes upon us restraints which are grievous to be borne, and requires duties which we have no heart to perform. We love sin—if not in all its forms, at least in the forms which we practice. The life of saints has no attractions for us: we prefer the pleasures and pursuits of the world.

Holiness to us is a bondage and a burden: to forget God, and do as we list, is the liberty in which we delight. Thus are our affections perverted: our choice is fixed upon wrong objects: we are afraid of God, but do not love him: we acknowledge his law to be right, and his service to be our duty, and even profess often to believe that it would be our highest happiness; but we do not keep his law; we do not love his service; and our happiness we seek in self-indulgence and in the pursuit and the possession of things which cannot, and which God never *designed* to, satisfy the longings of an immortal and sanctified soul.

Thus, my dear hearers, it seems that we are sinners, and that we love to be so. And if any man be disposed to deny either part of this proposition, I appeal to his life, and to his conscience when duly enlightened, to prove it all true. It is the doctrine of the Sacred Scriptures, whose faithful mirror reflects here, as elsewhere, but too perfectly the deep, inward convictions of the soul. The experience of us all is that it is true.

From these two fundamental propositions of the perfection of God's character and government on the one hand, and of the guilt and depravity of man on the other, I deduce

III. A *third*, which, if less obvious to reason, is certainly no less clearly taught in the Scriptures. This is, that in order to salvation, the law of God must be satisfied, and the sinner must be sanctified. In other words—without justification and sanctification, there can be no salvation to the sinner: and any system of

religion which fails of securing these two points, is radically defective and altogether inadequate to the exigencies of our case.

The necessity of justification at once appears from the Scripture truth, the force of which I trust we all feel, "that condemnation is passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." The necessity of sanctification is manifest from the Scriptures, which teach that without holiness no man shall see the Lord. And from the obvious consideration, that without this thorough revolution in our natures, we could never delight in God's presence and service, nor enjoy the holiness and blessedness of Heaven.

Before I proceed further, the terms which I have employed demand some explanation. Now, in order to justification, the law must be satisfied; and what satisfaction the law requires, we shall better understand by briefly considering its demands upon the guilty transgressor.

In the first place, then, it is obvious that the law demands the *punishment* of the transgressor. The majesty and authority of the lawgiver and the law cannot be maintained where the offender is allowed to pass with impunity. So in human governments. The sinner, then, under the perfect government of God, must pay the debt of suffering which is due, or there must be found a substitute who can do it for him.

But granting that such an one may be obtained to suffer in our stead, this only exempts us from enduring the penalty ourselves. It does nothing to entitle us to a reward of blessedness. We may be kept out of

Hell—as we are this day by the grace of God—and yet be infinitely short of Heaven! This blessed reward is due only to obedience, and as the sinner has not rendered, and from the nature of the case, cannot render this, there can be no Heaven for him, unless a *worthy substitute* in the sight of God can, by a voluntary obedience which he is not bound to render for himself, satisfy this demand of the law and claim for the pardoned offender the reward which is due to righteousness.

Thus, I think, we see clearly what satisfaction must be made to the law of God, that the sinner may be saved. The penalty must be borne; this keeps the sinner out of Hell; the law must be obeyed; this entitles him to an inheritance in Heaven. And these must be done by one who is not bound for himself. And thus we see, too, what is meant by the justification of the sinner before God. It is to pardon his offenses and treat him as righteous, for the sake of the sufferings and obedience which have been rendered by a substitute that is worthy in the sight of God.

But allowing that all this may be done—that the sinner may be exempted from the suffering which he deserves, and be entitled to a reward which he has not earned—something more must be done, before he can enjoy his unmerited inheritance. The purchased possession is of a kind altogether unsuited to his nature. As well might we expect the wild beast that roams the forest and lives by carnage, to grace a palace and luxuriate on dainties, as that an unsanctified sinner should delight in the holy society and service of

Heaven. His desires, his pleasures, and pursuits, all run in another direction. He has no heart for Heaven; no affection for those who dwell there. The very thought of God makes him start with terror now; how can he stand in his presence and gaze with holy and angelic rapture on his ineffable glory? Prayer and praise, imperfect as they are, are wearisome here: how can he sing the song of the saints, or vie with angels to do him honor? He cannot do it. The sinner must be born again. Old things must pass away, all things must become new. The dead soul must be raised to life; the sinner must be made a saint.

We repeat it, then, that in order to salvation, the law must be satisfied, and the sinner must be sanctified. This brings us to enquire,

IV. In the fourth place, who is it that can take the sinner's stead, and satisfy the law? Who is it that can take the sinner himself, and make him an heir of holiness and life and glory?

Here every system of man, whether devised by his own ingenuity under the pressing sense of need, or perversely forced from the Word of God, fails of effecting the end, and leaves man a guilty rebel still, with no right to Heaven, and in the road to Hell.

In vain do some hope that after expiating their guilt by sufferings of their own, endured only for a season, they shall reap the reward of their own righteousness in everlasting blessedness. Their system assumes a righteousness of which, alas! it is the testimony of God, that they have none! It puts a period to the penalty of the law, which the Scriptures leave with-

out limit as to duration, while they assign the sinner over to eternal destruction. It thus fails to meet the demands of the law both of obedience and suffering, and makes no provision for the sanctification of the soul, even though it had power to raise it to Heaven. The flames of Hell may torment the body; a guilty conscience, nerved with strength, may rock and agonize the soul; but sin is not substance that it may be consumed; and sinful passions let loose in Hell, far from destroying one another, or exhausting themselves, become more malignant and vigorous from exercise. Hell is a poor place to prepare for Heaven in!

Equally in vain is it to tell us, as some do, that a man or an angel may undertake for us and accomplish the work. What man or angel, though the most exalted, is not bound to love the Lord his God with all his heart and soul and mind and strength, and his neighbor as himself; and having done this, what more can he do, that may be set to the sinner's account? What man, or angel, though the highest that Heaven knows, could, in a few years of toil and persecution, and few hours of agony before and on the Cross, make satisfaction to the law for all the sins of a guilty race, committed by countless multitudes in every generation, each deserving, according to the divine decree, of everlasting destruction from the presence and glory of God? What man or angel, though the mightiest that God ever made, could raise a soul from death to life—thus exercising a power as omnipotent as that which spake creation into being, turns the hearts of kings like rivers of water, and breaks the chains that Hell

has forged around its helpless captives? And to what creature, infinitely removed as they all are below the great and glorious Creator, will God allow the praise of all Heaven to resound for the rescue of fallen man, through the countless ages of eternity?

No—It behooved another, far above every creature and every name that is named, whether in *Heaven* or on *Earth*, to undertake and execute for us. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, coequal with the Father, in all respects divine, stoops to take our nature upon himself. It is not man, nor angel, but *God-man*, or God manifest in the flesh, that is our Saviour. It is he, whose are the worlds and all the inhabitants thereof: who holds in his hands the government and the law: dependent on no being, and bound to none beyond his own righteous ordination. Of his own account, therefore, he comes; and, moved by no obligation but his own merciful and sovereign purpose, he assumes our nature complete, saving sin; thus *freely subjecting himself to the law*, that he may meet all its demands upon the sinner, and not only deliver him from eternal death, but secure for him everlasting life. To purchase Heaven, he obeys the law: to save from Hell, he suffers death. Infinite justice accepts the substitute. No mere creature could ever so magnify the law and make it honorable. No obedience was ever so worthy, no suffering was ever so satisfactory. The law can ask nothing more: its claims are fully met. Our iniquities were laid upon him: his righteousness is reckoned to us. Hell was our desert; Heaven is our reward! It only remains that this Saviour be able to



take us, all deformed as we are, and fashion us after his own glorious image: that he be able to deliver us from the bondage of Satan, whose captives we are, and from sin, whose pollutions we love; and thus, while he gives us freedom, enable us to preserve and enjoy it: and he is all the Saviour, and the very Saviour that we need.

All this he can do, and will, for all who call upon him in truth. A new heart he will give them: new desires he will create within them, and new objects of pursuit he will set before them. He will never leave nor forsake them. In all the wilderness he will be their companion and guardian and guide: no enemy shall triumph over them, no weapon formed against them shall prosper. All the trials and difficulties of the way he will convert into blessings: all things, by his care, shall work together for their good. And when, their course being finished and their work done, they come to leave all that is dear on earth, he will take them to himself: Heaven will be their home, and in his presence they shall dwell: sorrow and sin shall have seen their end; and the high and holy joys of angels and saints shall be theirs forever and ever.

V. But how may we become interested in this Saviour so as to experience the benefits of his redemption? To this point all that I have said has been converging; and it shall constitute the *last* general topic of discussion.

The question is substantially that of the jailer; and we have only to consider the answer which he re-

ceived: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

This answer, we may perhaps infer from the language of his question, was not precisely what he expected. Like Naaman, the Syrian leper, he probably thought that the ministers of God would tell him to do some *great* thing—something that would serve to expiate his guilt, and *merit* the favor and salvation of God. But he received no such direction. The inspired preachers pointed him to a Saviour *widely* different from himself. They well knew that if his salvation turned upon *his doing*, his case, like that of all other men, was hopeless. They tell him, therefore, to look *away* from himself, and put his trust in *Christ*. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ," say they—that he is what we have preached him unto you—a Saviour who has atoned for sin by his death, and purchased Heaven by his obedience; and as he has procured pardon and eternal life for all that will believe on him, so is he willing and able to perfect them in glory forever. They do not tell him that his conviction of sin was too shallow or too deep, or that his anxiety about his soul was excessive and needless: they do not tell him to make himself better, or to wait till he is so made. They point him at once to Christ as the Saviour he needed: who was willing to accept him just as he was, if he would commit himself into his hands; and, while he relieved him of the burden of his guilt, would, at the same time, free him of the bondage of sin. A helpless, ruined sinner, unable to avert deserved wrath or to merit favor which

he had forever forfeited, with a heart that still cleaved to the dust, and hardened, perhaps, under every effort of his own to break it; it was only to look, in this extremity of hopeless despair, to him that was *mighty to save*, and the work was done. He felt his need. By *grace* he *believed*: and, in the very act, embraced the Saviour to his heart. He is no longer the man that he was. The pardoned sinner is a rescued captive. He gave proof of the change. That same hour of the night, he took Paul and Silas, and washed their stripes: just before, he had thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks! How great the change! How complete the Saviour! The same voice that spoke his pardon, told him, "Go, sin no more." The same hand that removed the weight of wrath, took off the chains of bondage and of death! Go then, fellow-sinner, to Jesus on the Cross, for pardon—to Jesus on the Throne, for life and salvation.

In the improvement of this subject, I observe,

First. That we see in it the amazing love of God!

"God so loved the world," says John, "that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life." How incomprehensible is this love! Angels, who once ministered in his very presence in Heaven, transgressed his law, and immediately they were cast down to Hell as monuments of his wrath, where they are this day reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the *Great Day*! The voice of mercy they never heard! A Saviour they never

knew! Man sinned—and before his condemnation is pronounced, he hears the glad tidings of a seed that should bruise the serpent's head! In the fullness of time the Saviour comes: and behold! it is God's own Son! Not in glorious form amid angelic hosts; not in pomp and state even such as earth can furnish; but in human nature, and in the form of a servant! Stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted; despised and rejected of men! Cradled in a manger and expiring on a cross!! And all for fallen, degraded, hell-deserving man! Ah! he died that we might live!

“In songs of sublime adoration and praise,  
 Ye pilgrims for Zion who press,  
 Break forth and extol the great Ancient of days,  
 His rich and distinguishing grace.  
 What was there in you that could merit esteem,  
 Or give the Creator delight?  
 'Twas ‘even so, Father!’ you ever must sing,  
 ‘Because it seemed good in thy sight.’”

And once more we sing:

“With pitying eyes the Prince of Grace  
 Beheld our helpless grief;  
 He saw, and, oh! amazing love!  
 He ran to our relief.  
 O! for this love let rocks and hills  
 Their lasting silence break;  
 And all harmonious human tongues  
 The Saviour's praises speak.”

*Again*—We see in the light of this subject the necessity of faith and repentance, and the intimate connection between them.

The two are not the same: but they always go together. They are distinct but simultaneous movements of the soul; and sustain a close and inseparable relation to each other, so that faith cannot subsist without repentance, nor repentance without faith. As the one loathes our own righteousness even, as filthy rags in the sight of God, so the other lays hold on Christ's righteousness as being alone but all sufficient to cover our sins. The one humbles and renounces self—the other exalts and accepts Christ. The one looks at our own sins with abhorrence and grief—the other looks to Christ's righteousness with approving confidence and joyful hope. The one meets the truth, that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord"—the other meets the Scripture, that "without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sins." He that has one, has the other; and both unite in him that is born again. Hence it is that while our Saviour said to careless hearers, "Except ye *repent*, ye shall all likewise perish!" and Paul to the humbled jailer, "*Believe* on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved!" Peter addressing a multitude, who were pricked in their heart, and earnestly enquired "men and brethren, what shall we do?" Said unto them, "*Repent*, and be baptized every one of you *in the name of Jesus Christ* for the remission of sins." And Paul taught publicly and from house to house, "testifying both to the Jews and also to the Greeks, *repentance* toward God, and *faith* toward our Lord Jesus Christ." They all agree. In their true evangelical sense, though separate acts, the one involves the other, and

without either there is no salvation. You must believe, or you can't be justified; you must repent, or you can't be saved.

I observe, *again*, that this plan of salvation, however objectionable to the self righteous and to the worldly wise, appears good to those who feel that they are lost.

To repent is a hard task, because we love our sins: and to believe is humbling, because we love ourselves. Both strike at the very root of our pride, and revolutionize the inner and the outer man. But there is an extremity to which a man may be reduced, in which he will find comfort only by giving up all and doing both. It is comparatively easy to resist God, when in just anger he lets you do it: but let him rise in his power and smite you to the ground; let him turn conscience, all armed with daggers, against your soul; let him expose to your view the native blackness of your heart, and the flames of Hell ready to kindle around you: let him show you your impotency and guilt to the extortion of that cry of agonizing and self-depair, "Wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death!" And then the grace which showed you the depth of your ruin, will make the process of deliverance acceptable and easy. It will be sweet to repent and rest the soul on Christ. So it was with the jailer.

I observe, *again*, that this plan is suited to all men; and as it is God's method of saving sinners, we despair of none.

Whatever some may think, the truth is, that by na-

ture we are lost, and if saved at all, it must be through the grace of God in Jesus Christ, our Lord. In Christ there is for the sinner complete redemption. The Gospel of his grace is the wisdom of God and the power of God unto salvation. We solemnly disclaim in ourselves, and utterly deny in others, any power to make this Gospel plan acceptable, or to awaken one soul to life. If in us you hope, your trust is a spider's web, and you are doomed to sleep yet longer like the dead. But we preach the Gospel of the grace of God; and, relying on that power which brought our Lord Jesus Christ again from the dead, and made the crowning act of the wickedness of his enemies—I mean his crucifixion—the finishing stroke of the very foundation of his church—we preach it, knowing not whether it shall prosper in this or that, but confidently believing that it shall accomplish that which the Lord pleaseth; that the stout-hearted and the stiff-necked shall sooner or later bend or break before it; and that it is destined ultimately to triumph and gladden the hearts of millions of every nation and kindred and tongue, who now groan under the yoke of bondage.

Finally, I observe, that if you are not saved, the fault is your own—and your guilt is awful.

The provisions are ample, and all things are ready. The Saviour stands with arms wide open to receive you, and asks, Will you not come? He shows the prints of the nails in his hands and the wound in his side, and asks, Can you not trust me? He points to the agonies of the Cross, endured for sins not his own, and asks, Will you not forsake them? He opens to

your view Heaven above and Hell beneath, and asks, Will you not be saved?

You refuse at your peril. Heaven is offered without money and without price. Reject the gift, and you despise the giver. Hell is open before you—go on, and you must go in! But in doing so, you trample under foot the blood of the Son of God. Impenitent hearer! you cannot go to perdition from a christian land, without passing by the Saviour—without treating the blood, which he shed, with contemptuous neglect. Go on, then, over the blood of the Saviour to the abyss of woe—but ah! when there, as the streams of wrath pour in upon your soul, Hell will resound with the torturing lamentation, “I am my own destroyer!”

No, my fellow-sinner—rather look and live! Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.

















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